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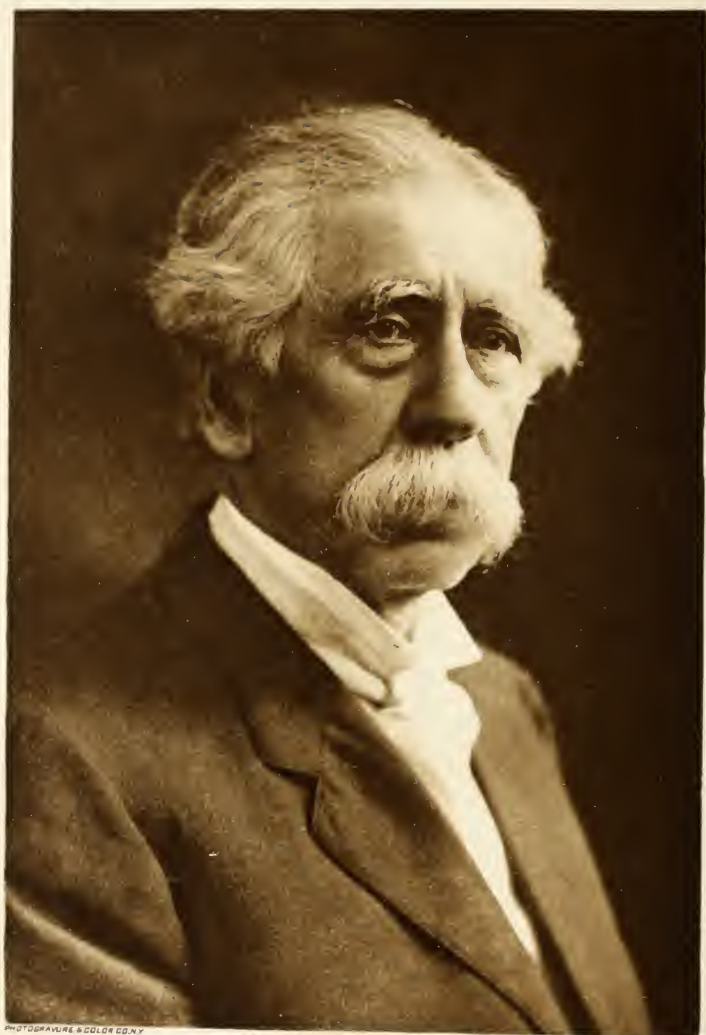
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Sam M. Freedwell

# PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

OF

## MEN AND THINGS

ON LONG ISLAND

PART ONE

pt. I

BY DANIEL M. TREDWELL

*Author of "A Sketch of the Life of Apollonius of Tyana," "Monograph on  
Privately Illustrated Books, A Plea for Bibliomania," Etc., Etc.*



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CHAPTERS	CONTENTS	PAGE
I.	Prefatory—1838 .....	13
II.	Fourth of July, 1838. Visit to Judge Riker of New York. Phenomena of Falling Stars, August 1, 1838. Timber and Fuel .....	23
III.	Brick. Neighboring Towns. School at Hempstead. The Tinder Box .....	32
IV.	Historic White Oak Tree. Capture of the Schooner, l'Armistad. Indian Shell Heaps. Indians of Long Island .....	45
V.	The Indians of Long Island .....	58
VI.	The Geology of Long Island. Sheep Parting. Ancient Laws in Regard to Sheep Herding .....	81
VII.	Natural History of Long Island. Professor J. P. Giraud, Jr. Long Island Ichthyology .....	94
VIII.	The Family Picnic. The Broom Factory. Mr. Terry's Invention. Testimonial to Captain Raynor Rock Smith. The Famous Horse Race .....	110
IX.	Crows. The Millerite Camp Meeting .....	125
X.	The Customs of the Marshing Season .....	135
XI.	Saturday Night at Milburn Corners. The Trip to Sag Harbor. Sag Harbor, July 26, 1843. Southampton. The Old Sayre House. Modern Sag Harbor .....	150
XII.	The Plover. The Hon. Samuel Latham Mitchill, M.D., LL.D. The Long Island Railroad. Reduced Postage Rates .....	163

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Portrait, Daniel M. Tredwell .....	Frontispiece
Map of Long Island .....	23
Residence of Elias Hicks .....	33
Seaman Homestead, Westbury, L. I. ....	34
The Old District School, Hempstead, L. I. ....	37
Tinder Box, Flint and Steel .....	43
The John Howard Payne Cottage at East Hampton, L. I. ....	158
Old Sayre Homestead at Southampton, Said To Have Been Built in 1648 .....	160
Portrait, Hon. Samuel Latham Mitchill, M.D., LL.D. ....	166
The Old Sammis Hotel at Hempstead, L. I. ....	167





## CHAPTER I.

### PREFATORY—1838.



HIS work is in no sense intended as a consecutive History of Long Island. These relations attach rather to the individual than to the locality, and are simply a collection of personal experiences of the author, with an account of the customs and traditions which have passed out of use and out of general recollection, and are related here precisely in the sequence in which they transpired, or as they were revealed to the author, and which may or may not have historical value.

As stated further on and more fully, the events are selected from a personal diary kept in chronological order and extending over a period of nearly half a century, with comments and elaborations upon such events made, in some instances, many years later, as remembered by the author, and having some pertinent relations to the locality, with but little relation, maybe, to each other, and which in their detail seldom rise to the dignity of history.

The first English settlement within the bounds of Queens County was at Hempstead, in 1640. The English settlers in the towns of Queens County acknowledged Dutch supremacy. The first substantial movement toward immigration was November 14, 1644, when the grant of a patent was made to some Stamford colonists. This grant extended from Long Island Sound on the North to the South Sea (Atlantic Ocean), accompanied by the condition that one hundred families should be settled thereon within five years. From this period, many English settlers came from Connecticut. Some came from the East end of Long Island, a large number of whom, the better conditioned styling themselves planters, settled on the common lands of the interior, taking up large areas; the poorer classes

settled on the necks near the bay. The necks were fertile tracts of land covered with forests, in many instances, to the edge of the South Bay. They were hives of population and sent out annually hundreds of men of muscle to man our merchant ships and Navy. The struggle for life was more favored on the necks than the inside lands; the settler had the never failing supply from the waters of the bay while his lands were being cleared and made available for agriculture.

We grew up amid the familiar names of Seaman, Hewlett, Denton, Mott, Carman, Bedell, Coe, Snedeker, Searing, Jackson, Alison, Cornwell, Raynor, Hicks, Smith, Weeks, Pettit, Rushmore, Eldert, Langdon, Wright, Remsen, Townsend, Duryea, Baldwin, Johnson, Gildersleeve, Combes, Titus, Hendrickson. These were all familiar names to us when a boy. They are now represented in every calling and profession in the Union.

We are not limited to any special territory in these notes, but generally our range will be the South Side of Long Island, from Rockaway to East Hampton, and the Plain Edge on the North, including the territory under the Kieft purchase.

In retrospecting the happy period immediately preceding and during the early stages of this Journal, the habits of the people of our native place were simple beyond modern conceptions of simplicity. Although being but twenty-two miles from the great and fashionable metropolis, New York, then containing a population of less than two hundred thousand, it reflected none of its gay life or trappings upon our immediate community. Communication was had with New York every alternate day by stage, going one day and returning the next. There was also communication by packet. Fifteen or twenty of these staunch sailing vessels, furnished with accommodations for passengers, in limited numbers, were constantly plying between our port (Hempstead) and New York, Albany, New Brunswick, Newark and Brooklyn. A large portion of farm produce reached the New York market by water, and all

bulky goods and building material were transported in like manner.

The difficulty of communication and of getting about from place to place kept people isolated, undisturbed by contact and antagonisms from without and uninformed of one another. They grew apart, awry and intellectually splay-footed. Newspapers, according to the modern conception of newspapers, were unknown.

The distinction of classes was much less marked than at present. Domestic service was a friendly and intimate relation of equals. The soil smiled with plenty, the bays swarmed with fish and the coverts with game. But all this old civilization so dear to us has been most iniquitously supplanted by the tyrannous bustle of the up-to-date man. Sixty-eight trains pass and repass daily within a few hundred feet of the old homestead where we were born, and a journey in these early days to the City of New York, which consumed two days, is now performed in a less number of hours. The above are but few of the changes which have taken place in and about the old homestead during a period covered by these notes.

The simplicity and economy of the household in those days were of the most vigorous character. Breakfast was usually at six in the morning, always by candle light in winter, dinner at twelve, and supper at six. Evening visiting was a common social entertainment during the winter months, quilting parties and gatherings at which hickory nuts, apples, new cider, crullers and doughnuts were among the refreshments, and in some more pretentious gatherings dancing was not uncommon. But by far the most popular were the evening tea parties, when both old and young could participate.

The clothing worn in winter was made from the wool raised on the farm. These garments were emphatically the product of the farm, from the raw material to the made-up garments. The surplusage of the wool or cloth was sold, stockings were made from the same material. Of all the phases of the wool industry, from the raw material to its con-

summation, none were more fascinating than the spinning into yarn the wool rolls. We have watched the work for hours, when a child, of our grandmother, her comeliness and grace, "beyond the reach of art," as she moved up and down, back and forth, erect and dignified, beside the big wheel, which she kept whirling with one hand and held the wool roll in the other, and watched the spindle take up the yarn; these things spell-bound us, and eighty years have not effaced them from our memory. It transcends all the skill of the most accomplished professor in the art of gracefulness, and all perfectly natural. She was our Ariadne.

The flax from which summer clothing was made was also raised on the farm. It was pulled, the woody part rotted, crackled, hatched, spun, woven and made into garments on the premises. These methods were true of nearly all the clothing worn, bed sheets and table linen were made of the same material. The leather for shoes was made from the hide of the cattle slain in the fall for winter supply of food for the household. It was tanned at the village tannery and made into shoes by an itinerant shoemaker who lived with the family while engaged on the work. And hence (from the animals killed for food) came the candles for the winter supply of light manufactured by a very simple process and called dips.

There were many products of the farm which brought in a small revenue. All kinds of truck were raised for home consumption, the surplusage sold. The principal cereals raised for market were Oats and Corn for which there was always a demand at the stores, where they were taken in payment for goods. Cattle, sheep and hogs were fattened and sold to herdsmen who purchased for cash, on the hoof, and drove them to New York for slaughter.

In our homestead the faithful old Tinder Box was the Lares and Penates as it was of every household on Long Island without which civilization could not have been maintained. (An account of the Tinder Box is given in this work.)



Coal (mineral) was unknown to the farmers as fuel. Warmth was obtained in winter in our homes from a wood fire maintained in a corner fireplace, four and a half feet high and ten feet wide, in front of which, or into which the family usually sat, and the greater the heat generated in front the more cold there was in the rear. To get an all round uniform warmth from the old fashioned fireplace was a thing unknown and impossible. When the Franklin was installed, which was simply a portable iron fireplace set out in the room, great comfort was introduced into the household and it was also a great saving of fuel. On its introduction the old fireplace went out of commission, was boarded up and became a convenient storage for wood and a deposit of filth from a colony of Chimney Swallows. The great merit in the Franklin was its substitution of an iron portable fireplace for the stationary one of stone, tile, or brick, the former of which generated heat all around.

Improvement after improvement followed in the Franklin until perfection was nearly attained. No special credit is due to any one individual, unless it be to Count Rumford who made a cook stove with an oven, then for the first time was learned how to bake and cook and be protected from the direct heat of the fire, which had formerly been done in front of the blazing fire of the hearth, or in a brick oven detached from the house.

From these early methods of our ancestors, from the old corner fireplace to the modern steam heat, from the old tallow candle to electricity, from the wheat shock in the field to a bag of Hecker's prepared flour were long and tedious processes of evolution. Machinery has also solved its great problem from the sickle and sythe to the reaping machine and from the old flail, which resounded on the barn floor all winter long, in separating the seed from the sheaf, is now accomplished in hours by the threshing machine where months were formerly involved. The next stage of development was from the house to the factory.



Wages were ridiculously low compared with modern times. Carpenters, painters and masons received six shillings per day and found, farm hands, laborers, ten dollars per month in winter and fifteen dollars in summer and board. A day's work was from sun to sun. Plain board at a farm house could be obtained at six shillings per week; women help in the house, six shillings per week.

There are some customs which seem deficient in that quality we call common sense, or precaution. That of conducting elections at the period of the opening of the following Journal was one. At the Spring meeting of the freeholders, or Spring elections, at the Village of Hempstead, most of the important laws were adopted by viva-voce vote, ayes and naves, or the uplifting of hands; boundaries of territory and leases of land were determined and pay of officers was fixed in this manner, every voter having two hands fraud might have affected in the count. Nor less primitive were the general elections for county, state and national officers, primaries were then unknown. These elections were held three consecutive days at convenient localities in the town for voters. Think of it—on the close of the polls of the first day's ballot at Merrick a motion was made by one of the inspectors, there being three, "That Smith Abrams (an inspector) shall be made the custodian of the ballot boxes and their contents until the next meeting of this board at sun-rise to-morrow at the inn of Thomas Baldwin at Hicks Neck." Whereupon the slots of the ballot boxes were sealed by pasting a paper over the slot, and placed in the buggy of Smith Abrams to be taken to his home, faithfully guarded and delivered for the next day's polling. Developments since that period have made it necessary to be more circumspect in the disposition of ballot boxes. A class of patriots has developed out of the party element known by the patronymic name of "Ballot Box Stuffers."

Newspapers as such were luxuries enjoyed by few. A Village paper, *The Hempstead Inquirer*, first published May 6, 1830, and called *The Long Island Telegraph and Friend*

of Education; the name of which was changed to Hempstead Enquirer, November 11, 1831, and so continues to-day. Also The Long Island Farmer published at Jamaica. These papers, both weeklies, were left by the stage driver at our house once a week and were our weekly supply of literature and information from the outside world.

Another prized souvenir of household literature was the Farmer's Almanac, a file of which hung seasoning in the chimney corner. It was consulted concerning the rising and setting of the Sun and Moon and their various phases, a record of the tides, changes in the weather; it also contained a chronology of historical events from the Garden of Eden to the present time. Besides all the above it contained a fund of anecdote, valuable medical receipts, and was invaluable as a guide to plain family cooking, and much valuable statistics, and its prognostications on the weather met with no more ridicule than the present Weather Bureau at Washington.

One of our earliest literary experiences was with an Old Farm Diary in manuscript which had been about our house from our earliest recollection. It was an imperfect document of about sixty large foolscap pages, the beginning and ending pages were missing, the corners of the remaining pages were worn off from use, or disuse, the ink had faded to a dingy brown, but the penmanship was a masterpiece of excellence. Judging from the date entries on the surviving pages it probably covered a period from 1720 to 1744 and as far as our memory goes contained matter relating principally to the farm productions and their disposition, accounts of journeys in such behalf, with many useful hints of how to run a plantation and make it pay. It also contained accounts of journeys made to Sag Harbor and the Hamptons on horseback. These trips constituted a great traveler in our mind at the time and we read them over and over with the utmost delight. No value was set upon this old manuscript at our house, but from our earliest recollection we were pleased to hear it read by my sister and we treasured up much of its contents. It was evi-

dently written by one of our ancestors who had occupied the old homestead two or three generations before us. The names of slaves of whom my father had heard were mentioned in it, canvassing some of their good or bad qualities. The old slave quarters at our homestead survived to our day, and were located about four hundred feet in the rear of our dwelling. We remember them many years after they had ceased to be used as quarters for negroes, and when they were used as a shelter and stable for horses and cows. The old building had a thatch roof and the clapboards were of oak. It was burned in 1834. Slaves were manumitted in this state in 1827 by an amended act of 1811 which required that those of a certain age should be provided for during life with a home on the estate. We distinctly remember two of them who left home every spring, tramped all summer and invariably came home in winter to board. Slaves were never a profitable investment on Long Island. They were an aristocratic equipment to a plantation, but the cost of feeding and clothing more than offset their labor. One Long Island farmer said that, "the hogs had eaten all his corn and his slaves had eaten his hogs and all he had was niggers." In after years when we had become old enough to suspect that this old diary might contain many valuable facts of local and family history we sought for it about the old homestead, but it had disappeared, whence no one knew. However, the old manuscript, by which it will be known in these Reminiscences had made a lasting impression on our mind and our first unfledged literary efforts were made in imitation of it, and we made a resolution early in life to write a diary of the events of our life. In fulfillment of that resolution we had scarcely learned to write when we attempted to keep a record of events. Nothing however came from our earliest random method. No persistent efforts were made toward a regular journal until 1838. And this Journal commenced in 1838, was continued uninterruptedly for nearly fifty years.

Looking over this Journal and loose notes in 1884, we

determined to destroy them in consequence of some unwise things in them, but on second thought it occurred to us that the time spent in a revision of them and a chronological arrangement would be time not wholly wasted in the estimation of many of our surviving relatives. We consequently undertook the task the result of which will be placed before the reader in these gossippy notes, preserving only such material having directly or indirectly some literary, scientific or historical significance to the subject matter indicated by the title hereto. We have felt a deep solicitude in the old Journal, and having a delicacy in preserving it in consequence of the above referred to entries and personal references never intended for other eyes than our own, and hope that its revision in its present form may meet with the approval of the readers of this Volume.

If the reader, born and reared amid all the conveniences and luxuries of modern life can conceive with any assurance the period when John Quincy Adams was President, or a state of society before anthracite coal—before kindling wood—before gas—before friction matches—when there was no canned fruit—no sewing machines—no typewriters—no telegraph—no expresses—no mail—no railroads—when eggs were fifteen for a shilling—chewing tobacco three pence a paper and whiskey three pence a glass, when there were no policemen—no tramps—no cigarettes—an age before the innovation of blotting paper or steel pens, and when everybody was happy and content, he may form a pretty fair conception of the surroundings under which the boy chronicler of these notes was born.

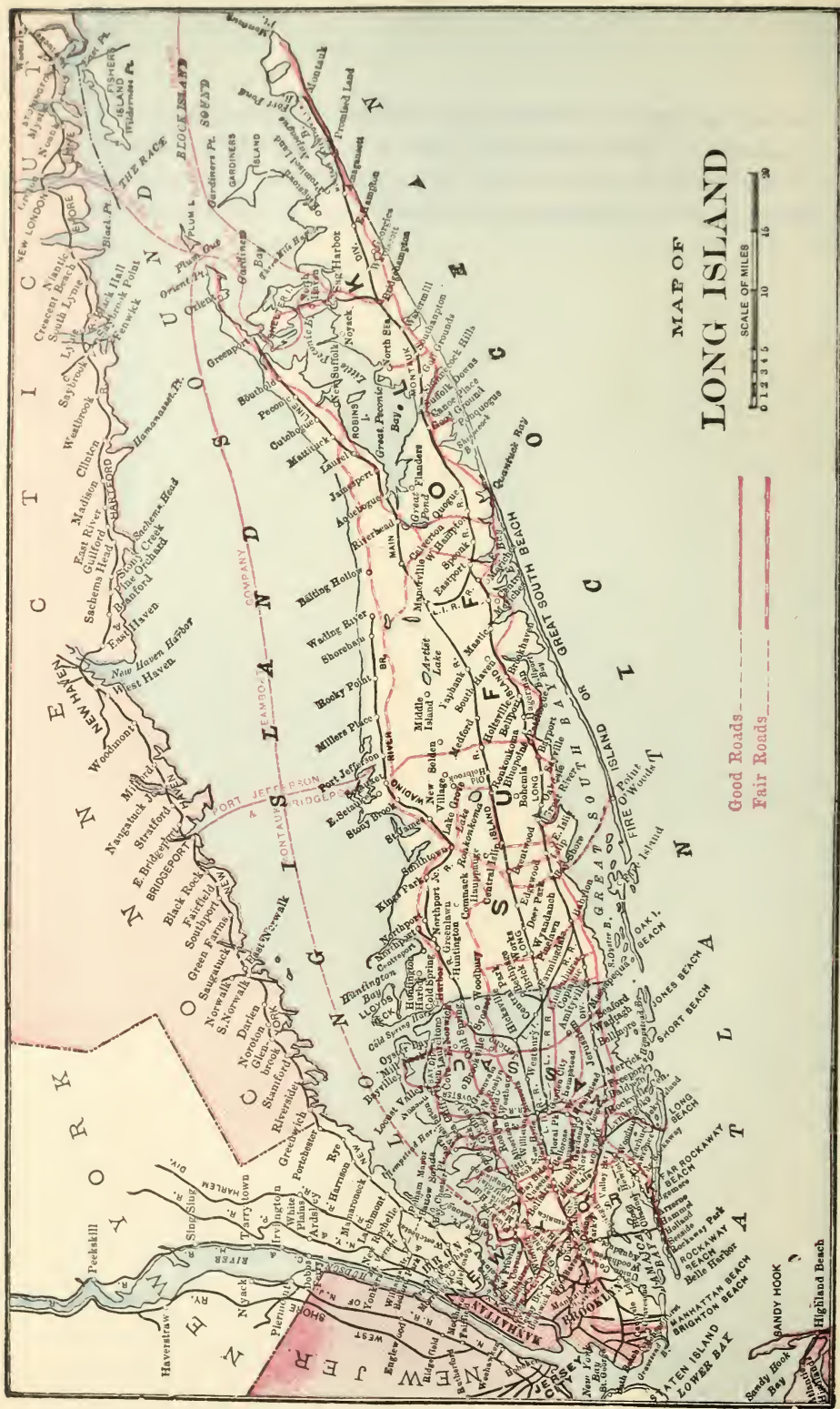
The idea of destroying these notes was the effect of reading a review of the Greville Memoirs in the Quarterly Review, London, of 1844. "Don't keep a Journal," says the Review, and the reasons given were convincing to us.

The Journal originally consisted of over one thousand foolscap pages which after a revision and emendation are now first published. No effort has been made to evade personal or family references in the matters quoted from the Journal.

The quotations are *verbatim* reproduction, (except in the occasional interpolation of a more expressive word or sentence) and are designated in this reproduction by the 10 point type of the printed text of this volume; the comments are in 11 point type.







# MAP OF LONG ISLAND

SCALE OF MILES  
0 1 2 3 4 5 10 15 20

Good Roads ————  
Fair Roads - - - - -

## CHAPTER II.

FOURTH OF JULY, 1838.—VISIT TO JUDGE RICHARD RIKER OF NEW YORK.—  
PHENOMENA OF FALLING STARS, AUGUST 1, 1838.—TIMBER AND FUEL.

*Thursday, July 5, 1838.*



YESTERDAY morning, early, my father took a team and the big wagon and carried a load of men and boys, principally boys, to Jamaica as a Fourth of July jubilee and to hear an oration by Mr. Vanderhoff.

The ride to Jamaica was enjoyed by everyone. After the ceremonies were over we returned by way of Hempstead, stopping at the Plains just northwest from Hempstead to see an encampment of New York State Militia there for recreation and practice. They had been there for several days.

This was an extraordinary spectacle to us. We had never seen the like before. It seemed like real war, and we started out on a crusade of investigation; but to obtain the true inwardness of a military camp in commission is likely to be attended with difficulties, as the sequel will show. By persistence, however, we did find out that the encampment was of the Thirteenth Regiment, of Brooklyn, under Colonel Abel Smith, who had just been commissioned, and was encamped on the plains for target and other tactical practice, for recreation, and to create an individual social solidity in the personnel of the regiment. The Thirteenth was also entertaining some companies of New York State Militia from the upper part of the state, who were on a visit to the Thirteenth and were occupying a camp adjoining.

The two camps made a great show, with a very warlike aspect. We saw but little of the manoeuvring of the troops, but we had some military experience which was quite salutary. While we were trying to learn the names of the Brooklyn companies and other things, we had proceeded so far as to ascertain that one company was the "Brooklyn Light Guards" and another the "City Guards." At this point we found ourselves suddenly surrounded by half a dozen fierce looking fighting men, to whom we surrendered, and were taken in charge by two fellows in "soger close" and guns, who invited us to take a walk with them, and we were marched out of the camp.

As soon as recognized by our friends thus flanked by two soldiers, they gave cheer after cheer, all of which did not seem very funny to us. However, this was the grand accentuated event of the day. Father thought we had captured the militiamen, but when he learned the true state of affairs, declared that it was only through an act of the greatest clemency, under the military code, that we had not been shot.



*Monday, July 16, 1838.*

My Uncle Oliver Ellsworth, of New York City, with whom we were spending a few days of our vacation, had an engagement last evening at the house of Hon. Richard Riker, Recorder of the City of New York, and invited us to accompany him. We gladly accepted the invitation. Judge Riker resides on Fulton Street, near Nassau; we do not remember the number. We were introduced to the Judge. He is very simple-mannered, is regarded as a clear-headed man and a dignified, honest magistrate. He had held the office of Recorder with honor a great many years, and he is immensely popular and has an unsullied official reputation. Now, while no disrespect apparently is intended to Judge Riker, the strange anomaly appears in the free and easy use of his name. He is always described as "Dickey Riker." Why this minimized slang, cant, or nickname should be so generally, or at all, applied to Judge Riker is to us an unsolved riddle. It is a travesty on reputation.

Recorder Riker is not captious or quarrelsome, and he is of great flexibility of manner, not disposed to acts which might impugn his good name or shock the most delicate public sensibility; and yet he bears scars inflicted in a most disreputable meeting with one Robert Swartwont at Hoboken. Who the aggressor was in this affair of honor we have never learned, but we are far from believing that Judge Riker provoked such a crisis.

The interview with my uncle was held in an adjoining room, which, being concluded, we left. Long shall we remember the interview with the courteous Magistrate "Dickey Riker."

*Thursday, August 2, 1838.*

Last evening our community was startled by a display which, although by no means a unique occurrence, was nevertheless a noteworthy spectacle. It was a phenomenon of falling stars, meteors. They were not in great profusion, but in sufficient numbers to excite the wonder of those who were fortunate enough to have witnessed them.

But the interest of our immediate neighborhood was greater than witnessing the mere descent of these glowing bodies through our atmosphere. One of them reached the earth and embodied itself in the meadow near the residence of Tredwell Smith, about half a mile from our house. Those who saw the descent say it came with a flash resembling a vivid flash of lightning and left a streak of light through the air.

Hearing of this, and being curious to see the celestial visitor, we, in company with Timothy Tredwell, equally curious, visited the meadow this morning, with the intention of capturing the stranger; but the meteor had already been removed. We saw the fresh-dug hole from which it had been taken and were told that the stone was in the possession of Epenetus Smith, who had removed it. Enquiries were then made of Epenetus Smith. He said that he had the stone locked up in his wagon house and that it was not a stone, but iron; that it was a

great curiosity and he expected to get a big price for it; but he did not offer to show it to us.

We never saw that stone, nor do we know positively that Epenetus Smith ever had it. We have his testimony that he had it; it was a matter of public notoriety that he had it, and, further, we have the strong circumstantial evidence of the fresh-dug hole on the day that we saw it. And we have the testimony of the farm hand who helped Epenetus Smith remove it. And we also have the word of the highly respectable old resident of Merrick, Elijah Smith, surveyor and school-master, that it was on exhibition two successive years at the agricultural show for Queens County. Truth is sometimes wonderfully evasive.

The visitations of meteoric storms are of so rare an occurrence that localities have become famous in consequence of having been fortuitously the scene of one of these visitations. In Great Britain, where a record has been kept, it gives accounts of only sixteen in two hundred and fifty years which have reached the earth in good condition; they are burned up in their descent.

Apropos of aerolites, meteoric showers, we remember distinctly the grandest of the kind said to have taken place within the memory of man. It was on the night of November 13, 1833. We were but a child at the time. A little flurry of snow had fallen during the day, giving a conspicuous whiteness to the landscape. The shower came on about eight o'clock in the evening and continued all night, an unintermitting cascade of fire, during which period hundreds of thousands of meteors must have fallen. They came from all parts of the heavens, and their paths crossed each other at all angles. How many reached the earth we shall never know. The sky was brilliantly tinted in reds and seemed in a blaze from horizon to horizon. The snow was red from reflection, and the atmosphere appeared thick with fire. It was a night of terror at our home, none but the female members of our family being at home in the early evening, and they really believed that the end of the world was at hand. My father came home about ten o'clock. He rebuked us for our fears by his real, or affected, indifference in the impending collapse of all terrestrial things. He talked as familiarly about falling stars as if he were one, and as of no very rare occurrence anyway; he had known many such in his time, and that no harm would come out of it. He pretended that it wasn't much of a shower anyhow. This as-

surance and his own frigid unconcern had the effect of reassuring the rest of the thoroughly frightened household, and a more cheerful spirit pervaded until bed time. The above, the greatest of all meteoric showers of which there is any record, was witnessed from our home at Hempstead South in 1833.

The record of this phenomenon in the Astronomical Department at Washington shows that the extent of territory in which it was observable was from Canada to the Northern boundary of South America, and a longitudinal tract three thousand miles in width.

From the earliest periods theories were entertained concerning the origin of meteors. Diogenes Laertius thought they came from the sun. Pliny laughs at the theory, but utterly fails to improve upon it. La Place thought that they came from the depths of space, and at other times he thought they had a lunar origin. The Greek philosophers had four hypotheses of their origin, "telluric," raised by hurricanes, a solar origin, or an origin in the regions of space.

There is a curious legend of the Algonkins, of which all the Long Island Indians were sub-tribes. This legend, which seems to have some pertinence here as showing that they were familiar with meteoric phenomena long before the advent of the white man among them.

They had been taught to never complain or speak ill of the elements. The severest storms of wind, snow, frost or hail were treated with the greatest respect. They would endure great heat or cold without complaining. To complain of the heat or glare of the sun would subject them to blindness. They never murmured at the clouds or stormy weather, lest they be shut up in caves in the mountains where no light can enter. The moon must be treated with the same consideration, for those who said aught against her were in danger of death by fiery rocks from that luminary.

Dr. Smith says that meteors are mostly iron and have come from some place where there was but little or no oxygen. Now, the moon has no atmosphere, no water and consequently

no oxygen. Many of these meteors are almost pure iron, as Epenetus Smith said his was. Sir Humphry Davy thinks the combustion is caused by the rapidity of descent, that they become incandescent and explode by the heat, and not by gases contained in them. In the long record of meteors only four persons are known to have been killed by their fall.

In the analysis of meteors it is very remarkable that no new chemical element has been detected in any yet discovered. We are familiar with their composition. The largest meteor ever known to have fallen to the earth was one discovered by Captain John Ross near Cape York, Greenland, in 1818. This meteor was by Arctic explorer R. E. Peary, U. S. N., brought to the United States and deposited in the vestibule of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, where it now remains. Its circumference is about eleven feet, its length four feet three inches, and about two and a half feet thick, its weight about 10,000 pounds, and it is ninety-two per cent. pure iron.

Since the above the Willamette Meteor, found in Willamette Valley, Oregon, was purchased by Mrs. William E. Dodge for \$20,000 and deposited in the same museum. It is ten feet three inches long, seven feet wide at the base and four feet thick, and weighs 31,000 pounds. It is ninety per cent. pure iron.

This museum now contains four great meteors. The British Museum contains several. One of the oldest known, historically, is in a temple at Mecca, Arabia. Its name is the "Right Hand God," and it was worshipped long before the time of Mahommed. Another which was the subject of worship was set up in the temple Cybele at Phrygia. This is supposed to have fallen from Jupiter. It was through the decree of this oracle, or of this cult, that Hannibal was obliged to turn back from his intended investment of Rome. It is supposed that the image which fell, (The Jupiter), mentioned in The Acts of the Apostles, was a meteor.



*Wednesday, August 8, 1838.*

John A. King, of Jamaica, called at our house to-day on some business with my father, which they evidently did not care to transact in our presence. This being evident to us, we retired without being requested, in good order.

They were together about one hour and a half, when we were called in to witness their signatures to a paper writing, which we did, and Mr. King gave us four shillings. Whether this was a reward for our politeness in retiring or legal fee to which we were entitled for our services, we do not know, nor did we stop to enquire, but accepted the compliment with thanks.

*Monday, August 20, 1838.*

On the first of June last we commenced remodeling our house, and since that time we have been enjoying the novel experience of living in the barn and wagon house, which have been temporarily fitted for occupancy, the horses having been dispossessed.

The younger members of the family enjoyed exceedingly the indigent method of life. Yesterday part of the family moved back into the house, made tenable, but far from completed.

The carpenters contracting for this work, which was to be done by day's work and to be completed by the third of October, were Tredwell Smith and Abram Johnson. Their compensation is to be six shillings per day and board. A similar agreement was made with the painters and masons. All the hauling of lumber and brick was to be performed by my father.

Some wonderful revelations were made in dismantling the old house, which had been standing over one hundred years. The laths holding the plaster of the walls and ceilings were split laths made by hand, and were held in their places to the studs by wrought nails, also made by hand. Every timber in the old structure, even the rafters, was of oak and had been taken from the woods and squared by hand with an axe, and were as sound as when first put up. The shingles on the east and west gables and the rear were hand-made and an attempt had been made to effect the ornamental by rounding the lower ends of some of them. These shingles were fastened to their places by wrought nails, hammered out by a blacksmith one at a time, and not one of them had been driven to its place until a hole had been drilled for it with a gimlet. The amount of labor and patience required to shingle a house of this kind in this manner would appall any modern mechanic. The shingle gables of the old house were used in the reconstruction. At the time the old house was built, and down to the time of reconstruction, there were no ready-made shingles. They were all made by hand from the lumber cut in uniform lengths; there were no tongued and grooved boards and planks; the planing machine had not yet been invented; no ready-made doors or window sash, no ready-made wainscoting, no trim, no mould-

ings; all these things, at a vast amount of labor, were manufactured or worked out by hand from the raw material by the mechanic. And a house could be built cheaper then, in 1838, than now, and better.

*Tuesday, September 4, 1838.*

The marshing season commenced this year on the fourth day of September. We had heretofore regarded marshing as a picnic season, but, being admonished that our time could be more profitably spent at school, and being conscious of the fact ourselves, we acquiesced without crushing effect or disappointment. An option, however, was granted for Saturday.

P. S.—Saturday turned out to be a very stormy day, and our picnic a total failure.

*Saturday, September 8, 1838.*

It has been a custom for many years for owners of large tracts of woodland to sell off portions in the fall for firewood during the winter to those who have no such tracts of reserve woodlands. This unique custom, it is said, is the outgrowth of an earlier one in which the wood was given away to anyone who would remove it from the ground. This was at a period when cleared lands were more desirable than woodlands, the wood being an incumbrance. Nearly all the country was covered with timber then. As years rolled on and woodlands decreased, and cleared lands and population increased, the timber began to have a commercial value, and a charge was made for the wood removed. This custom grew, and the sale of standing wood for fuel became a traffic as the supply decreased, and now (1838), to prevent the utter denudation of forests and woodlands laws are being enacted for their preservation, protection being necessary.

Yesterday we attended the sale by vendue of wood lots of Thomas Carman, of Raynortown. This woods at Coe's Neck had been already surveyed and staked out into plots and numbered, the stakes enclosing plots of standing timber of different values, and were now to be disposed of to the highest bidder.

There were about eighty persons present in the woods at the sale, some buyers, some spectators, and some choppers. Those who intended to buy had, generally, made their selections before the sale. Purchasers had different objects in view in purchasing. Those who wanted firewood only selected plots containing the most hickory and oak; some bought plots largely represented in chestnut for splitting into rails for fencing, or making posts; boat builders selected plots that would cut up the most, and to the best advantage, timber for boat building. There were, sometimes, strongly contested bidding on extraordinarily desirable plots. Occasionally an old, gnarled oak would be worth more than enough to the purchaser to pay for the whole plot, and rails to the farmer were always an important item.

The terms of the sale, as announced, were ten per cent. down, and the balance before an axe is put in the plot; all trees of five inches diameter or under not included in the sale, and are to be left standing; and all timber remaining on the premises after the first day of March, 1839, shall be forfeited. All the well-to-do farmers of our section owned a reservation of woodland, which they held for an emergency, or perchance, a fuel famine, which for cause sometimes became imminent. It is considered that a well disposed farm should have at least twenty-five per cent. of woodland in reserve, and so farmers generally rely upon these fall sales and lay in their firewood from purchases made under them, and preserve their own holdings for an emergency.

Wood tracts are dwindling away on Long Island, and the time when they will fail utterly is regarded not only as probable, but as absolutely certain, and in the near future; the end is already in sight. And even for the immediate present the problem of firewood for those who hold no reserve of woodland, and of small means, is regarded one of serious import, and getting worse as woods grow scarcer. Whole forests are going up chimneys annually.

And again, the fuel question is one of the most foremost of all charities in the country districts. With the poor, who cannot provision themselves for a long and tedious winter, that of fuel was not of less importance than that of food. And we know of individuals who have interested themselves with a self-devotion on bitter cold, stormy nights in winter by personally visiting some of their poor neighbors to ascertain if they were beyond want, or had sufficient firewood to keep themselves and families from suffering; and, without ostentation, we know that the private wood piles and pork barrels have contributed time and again to the relief of the cold and hungry, and not through agencies or organized charity bureaus, but by the spontaneous goodness of their humane hearts.

The wasting away of our forests was an ominous menace to the human race in our latitudes. It was estimated that the next generation would see the final consumption of our forests. And until the discovery and general use of coal as a fuel, this view was pretty generally entertained. Coal was first used for domestic purposes by Judge Jesse Pell of Wilkes-Barre in 1808, and so slow was its progress that it was not in general use in 1845, but it solved the problem, and we are no longer dependent exclusively upon our woodland products for this great essential of life. But even now there are timid people who speculate upon the coal exhaustion as being within human probability. But if there is any reliance to be placed upon

science, geology and mathematics, there is anthracite enough in the bowels of our earth to supply us, at the rate of present consumption for domestic, mechanical and manufacturing purposes, to put off the day of that tribulation at least 60,000 years, at which period, it is more than probable, all our obligations to humanity will have lapsed.



## CHAPTER III.

BRICK.—NEIGHBORING TOWNS.—SCHOOL AT HEMPSTEAD.—THE TINDER BOX.

*Wednesday, October 10, 1838.*



E made the trip yesterday to Manet Hill for brick with which to construct a well. Well brick, that is, brick made specially for wells, or curb brick, were not common in stock with ordinary dealers or brickyards. But the Montforts at their kiln at Manet Hill kept them in stock.

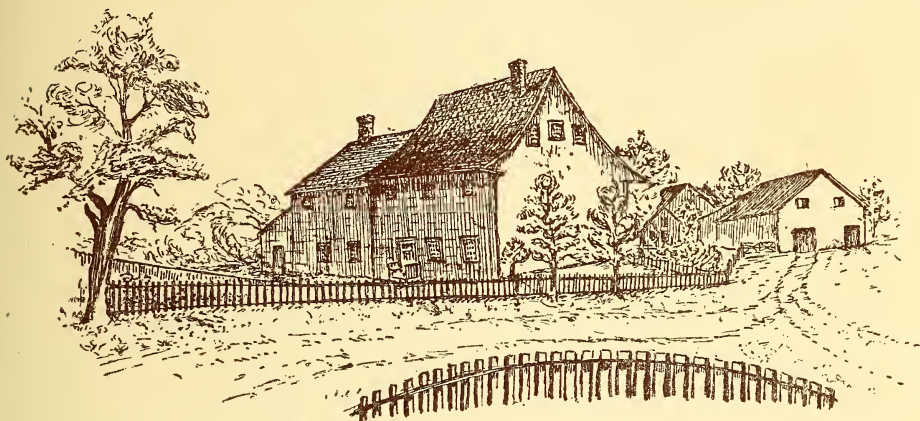
We left home about half past four A. M. with two teams. Manet or Manetto Hill is of little or no historical significance, being simply a brick manufactory. It is, however, a radiating point of Indian traditions. It was the fabled home of the great Spirit Sachem, or Manetou of the Algonkin tribes of Long Island, and it was here that some of his marvelous feats were performed.

Manet Hill is located about midway between Long Island Sound on the North and the Atlantic Ocean on the South, in the town of Oyster Bay, just East from Hicksville.

Our journey was along the South Road to Merrick, and thence Northerly along the Whale Neck Road (in early times an Indian trail only) to the Plain Edge, or Bethpage Turnpike, thence to Westbury along a road, the continuation of the Whale Neck Road. The journey to this point was uninteresting and without incident. The weather, however, was delightful. There were some well-to-do farmers along the Plain Edge with luxurious surroundings; otherwise the country was poor, with but little show of thrift. We went to Westbury to call upon a relative of our family, after which we drove directly to Hicksville.

Westbury is a quaint old place, the principal attractions of which are the evidences everywhere of its antiquity and traces of the memorable past. The residences are scattered about at random along a country road, which made itself; the dwellings are very old and still bear the old octagonal cedar shingle dating back to the revolutionary and colonial days. Some of these old houses are still in good preservation and if cleaned up and put in repair, would be good for another hundred years. There are two Friends' meetings houses here. It was here that Elias Hicks, the great Quaker preacher and reformer, was born. He preached a creed which bears his name. He removed to Jericho, where he continued to live until his death in 1830. It was here also that Rachel Hicks was born (born Seaman) in the old Seaman homestead in 1789, and resided until her marriage with Abraham Hicks of Rockaway. The old Seaman homestead is still standing. Rachel was a relative of Elias,

and like her renowned kinsman, became a great preacher and reformer, but not along the same lines. She was a most rigid orthodox Christian. He was avowedly unchristian, declaring that the scriptures had been a great curse to mankind and had been the cause of more evil than good in the world. Hence arose the schism and the two meeting houses at Westbury.



Elias Hicks.  
Residence  
Jericho.

Rachel Hicks died at the age of ninety, having traveled and preached in nearly all the states of the American Union. She is venerated here. Many of her followers, however, are slipping away from their simplicity of speech and dress and engaging in the affairs of the world like other folks.

Hicksville is a place hard to describe, there being nothing here to describe. It was named from Elias Hicks and has been liberally laid out, but sparsely peopled. There is a hotel and a car house of the Long Island Railroad, with four or five inconsiderable residences and many mere shanties. The principal population appears to be dogs. There were hundreds of them; they run wild, recognizing no master, and were under your feet everywhere. So numerous and so great a nuisance have they become that crusades have been instituted for their destruction. There is no future in sight for Hicksville; its prospective streets are grown up with grass.

From Hicksville our route lay eastward about two miles to Manet Hill, where we arrived about 10.30 o'clock. We purchased the brick, loaded our two wagons, fed our horses, ate our lunch, which we had brought with us, and left at about one o'clock.

We took another route on our way home, *viz.*, through Bethpage and Jerusalem (omitting Farmingdale), both of which are rambling villages grown up regardless of order, one in Oyster Bay and the other in Hempstead, and both on the East end of the Great Plains. Bethpage is a small village of farmers with a population of about two hundred inhabitants, principally Quakers, with a tidy meeting house. It is a clean, comfortable looking place. This is all the description it will stand; its history would be voluminous.

Jerusalem was settled by Captain John Seaman, of Danish origin. He had six sons and six daughters. They came from Stamford in 1666, although John Seaman's deed for 6,000 acres at Jerusalem bears the date 1657. It was witnessed by Wantagh, Sachem. There are now thousands of the descendants of Captain John Seaman in the United States, and they fill honorable positions. They are senators, congressmen, lawyers, judges, doctors and generals, and they are still in evidence in Jerusalem; every other family is a Seaman. During the Revolution it is said that the Seaman family, when the place was looted by one of the contending armies, had the silver saved by one of their slaves throwing it into the swill-barrel. Tradition says that a village community of Indians were settled in the immediate neighborhood when the white man arrived and claimed tribal jurisdiction over all the territory from Old Westbury to Jerusalem South. They were supposed to be the



The Seaman House, at Westbury, Long Island  
More than 200 Years Old.

Rockaways. The deeds to the Seamans and other early white settlers were executed by the Rockaways, Massapequas and the Montauks through their Sachems. As the lands on the North and South rim of



the island became cleared and brought under cultivation by the whites, the Indians generally retreated to the woods of the interior, where they could follow their thriftless methods of life without friction from the whites, and without having the customs of civilization forced upon them.

These village Indians sustained themselves by the simplest kind of agriculture. They cultivated a small patch of Indian corn and squashes, and by clamming and fishing in the waters of the South Bay or in the Hempstead Harbor on the North, and by hunting in the forests by which they were surrounded, in this manner they managed to exist. They had a well defined trail leading from Jerusalem to the South Bay and another to Hempstead Harbor.

Straight well-graded and well-kept roads have succeeded the old trails, designated by marked trees. The status of these blazed highways is attested in nearly all the old deeds describing or locating real property on the island. Trails and paths were the logical, as streams and rivers were the natural, boundaries between owners. Another Indian factor, wampum, appears in real estate transactions at Jerusalem. It frequently composed a part, or the entire consideration between the whites.

The ancient Indian village mentioned was stockaded and the stream at the place ran through it. It is probable that the stockade enclosed a piece of ground now owned and occupied by S. Seaman near the Friends' meeting house, but on the other side of the road. A similar stockade was constructed by the Indians at Fort Neck for their protection, and the Dutch at Flatbush enclosed the Steinbokkery, and the English at Hempstead erected similar defences.

The return route from Manet Hill was more interesting than the one we went over. After leaving Jerusalem, which has no prominently defined village center or boundaries, it being a straggling cluster of dwellings of thrifty agriculturalists, storekeepers and an occasional industry, numbering in population not over three hundred, mostly Quakers. At this point is a crossroad. We left the Jerusalem Road and turned Southwesterly through a continuous settlement, or continuation of Jerusalem, to Merrick, and ended the day in arriving at home about eight o'clock. In a straight line Manet Hill is about fourteen miles from our house, but following the tortuous roads increased the distance traveled to about sixteen miles.

*Tuesday, October 18, 1838.*

Notices had been posted in several conspicuous places in School District No. 10, Town of Hempstead, calling for a special meeting of the freeholders of the district at the schoolhouse on the 16th of October, 1838, at early candle light. The purpose of the meeting being to authorize Christian Snedecker, Abraham Miller and Elbert Tredwell, Trustees, to repair schoolhouse and to contract for fuel for the coming winter. We obtained permission to attend the meeting. The schoolhouse is an

exceedingly old structure, located at Bethel on the road leading from Hick's Neck to the village of Hempstead. The old house has been standing between seventy-five and one hundred years and is shockingly out of repair; at best, it is an old barrack. The structure is about fifty feet by twenty, of wood, clapboards of oak. Light is admitted to the interior through seven square windows distributed along the three sides of the building, with solid board shutters hung on hand made, wrought iron hinges without fastenings, except the logs of wood which stand against them, serving the double purpose of keeping them open or shut, as circumstances required, may claim that dignity.

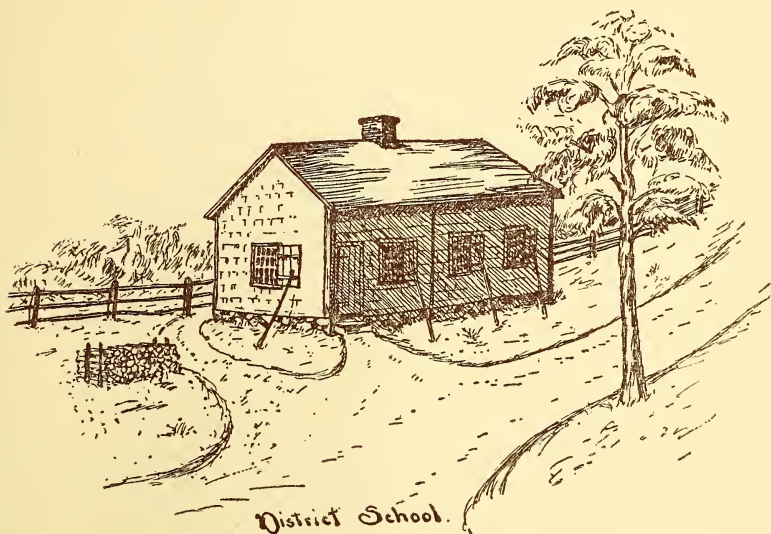
The interior of the Bethel schoolhouse consists of an entry and one schoolroom, sealed entirely with plain boards, no superfluity of paint or plaster intruded to mar its absolute rusticity. The great oaken beams axed square are exposed overhead. The desk at which the pupils sit is constructed of common pine boards and extends continuously around three sides of the interior, the surface of which is nearly covered with the rudely cut initials of three generations of ambitious students. The master's desk is on a slight elevation in the Northwest corner of the room. On reaching the schoolhouse, no one had yet arrived, but the freeholders soon began to gather around the outside of the house. Finally the clerk of the district and the school trustees arrived. On entering the schoolhouse, it was discovered that there was no light and no provisions had been made for making it. Light on such occasions was usually furnished by someone living contiguous bringing a lantern, or tinder box, but here seemed to be an absence of both. In this dilemma someone in the audience in derision called out, "Strike a Light" (having reference to the tinder box method). Now, although friction matches had been invented more than three years previously, they were not in general use in School District No. 10. Israel Frost, however, the store-keeper at Milburn Corners, to the astonishment of many of the assembled freeholders, produced a light by means of the marvelous friction match (a thing so different from the present friction match as not to be recognized by the present generation as such), from which nine tallow candles supported against the board ceiling of the room, with corrugated tin reflectors, were lighted, and the meeting was called to order by Elbert Tredwell, chairman of the board of trustees, and they at once proceeded to business. The meeting had been called for the purpose of empowering the trustees to expend an amount of money in repairing the schoolhouse and in procuring fuel for the coming winter. After many resolutions and amendments, which seemed to us to have little to do with the real issue, it was resolved that the trustees spend an amount not exceeding fifty dollars in repairing the schoolhouse. And for fuel the contract was awarded to Jacob Smith (of William) for thirty-two dollars, the wood to be seasoned hickory and to be delivered at the schoolhouse in four-foot lengths. The meeting adjourned. A desultory conversation was, however, carried on for an hour or more, principally

concerning the building of a new schoolhouse in a more convenient and more central locality in the district.

The question of a new schoolhouse had always been a fruitful one for discussion and dispute; it had been agitated thirty years before this meeting. (And forty years later it was consummated.) The people of Hempstead took a great interest in the matters of schools during the town's early history. The first schools established on Long Island were at Hempstead, and as early as 1675. This claim is disputed by Newtown, but after an investigation we award the honor to Hempstead.

It has been said that there were small results from these early schools. To answer this objection we have only to note the contrast between the children brought up in school communities and those who are not. If no other result, a marked thriftiness and better manners are characteristics of those neighborhoods which are supplied with schools. This is true of all time.

Our earliest recollection of this honored seat of learning, the Bethel schoolhouse, was in 1832, at which period and to the present



1838, it was used six days of the week for school purposes, for Methodist prayer meetings on Friday nights, and occasionally religious services on Sunday. We remember on one occasion old Jimmy Horton, the great Methodist revivalist, preached there on Sunday to an audience brought together from ten miles about the schoolhouse, which did not hold one-sixth of those assembled.

At the period above referred to William Fowler was the

master. He had succeeded Master Ellison. Master Fowler came in answer to an advertisement for a teacher. He was popular, but he had at least one failing. At times he took too much "fire water," and caused school to be closed, sometimes two or three days. He was succeeded by Jesse Pettit, a teacher who rendered faithful service for many years in this school. He subsequently became a proselyte to Mormonism and moved with his entire family to the city of the Saints in Nauvoo. His successor was John McGee, an Irishman, and a man of more than average ability. He taught there many years. He married Maria, daughter of Samuel Miller, and settled at Christian Hook. These teachers were not men of great learning or pretentiousness, but they were qualified for the work they had before them.

The conversation of the freeholders turned finally to friction matches, an exhibition of which had been witnessed by many of them for the first time this evening; but with that audience friction matches had no defenders. It was quite the unanimous opinion that they were an expensive and dangerous luxury, only for the rich, and could not be made to serve the poor man to advantage, nor could they ever come into general use. The bayman could not use them because they would not endure dampness, or continued stormy weather. It would be impossible for this invention ever to supply the place of the time-honored and trusty old tinder box, which was much more convenient, perfectly safe, and costs nothing. One remarked that these matches, like all other new-fangled things, were against the poor man, were against the Bible—an invention of the Devil (Lucifer). And by this little knot of freeholders of School District No. 10 of the Town of Hempstead, lucifer matches were doomed to failure.

The foregoing is a *verbatim* copy from the Journal, written more than sixty years ago (now 1900). The conservative old tinder box civilization has passed out and the friction match is monarch. It is sold one thousand (enough to fire a city) for five cents. It has been made waterproof and will endure in any climate; while the tinder box is now stored away with the rubbish of the garret or is kept on exhibition among the antiquities or muniments of the past. No discovery since the landing of Columbus has been more potent in the civilization of Long Island than that of the friction match. "Strike



a Light," is typical of a whole civilization, from the barbarian to the nobleman, for the attainment of which monks have fasted, anchorites have prayed, but which science alone achieved. That Prometheus climbed the heavens and with Minerva stole fire from Jupiter and bestowed it upon man, appeared in the ingenuous minds of our ancestors concerning the origin of fire, but the myth has long since ceased to satisfy us. Neither ancient history, nor the legendary, or traditionary accounts of the existing savage races throw any light upon the question of the origin or discovery of fire. The narratives contained in the oldest records are obviously mythical, like the fable of Prometheus, which of itself is but a version of the older Vedic myth of the God Agni, who, having taken fire from a casket, gave it to the first man, Manu, through Pro-mantha, which, in the old Vedic language, means to accomplish by means of friction. Of the same character are all the myths of savage races of the origin of fire, having been brought by some wonderful bird, or animal, or God, and presented to man.

The discovery of fire and the art of reproducing fire and light must be regarded as among the greatest achievements of the human intellect. The uses of fire lie at the foundation of every human industry, and it seems that the epoch of man's advancement dates from the discovery of fire, and that without it he could not have arisen much above the condition of the brute.

The reception of this little thing is a type of the reception of every invention, and the prejudice it had to subdue was typical of true progress.

In 1835 there were serious dissensions in the New York Tammany. A meeting of Tammany delegates had been called at the hall for eight o'clock. Tammany at this time was divided into two factions, Regulars and Independents. At the hour appointed the Independents began to gather. They found the doors of the hall locked and a meeting proceeding inside. The Regulars had gained access in advance and had

proceeded with the business—a trick by no means new to the Tammany code. No deliberation was taken to determine what course to pursue. The doors of the hall were forced and the Independents entered, to find that the Regulars had transacted all the business for the evening and were just preparing to adjourn. A rough and tumble fight ensued, in which the Regulars were forcibly ejected from the hall and their minutes destroyed. But before retiring, the Regulars had managed to shut off the gas, thus leaving the victorious Independents in total darkness. Then came the cry, "Strike a Light." But some Independent, contemplating a contingency of this kind, came prepared with candles and the newly invented friction matches, which enabled him instantly to "Strike a Light," which he did, and the regular meeting was organized under the call and proceeded with the business. The Regulars, however, took their revenge by nicknaming their opponents "Loco Focos," by which opprobrious epithet they are known to this day.

The origin of the expression "Strike a Light" is undoubtedly very ancient, going back probably to the discovery of the earliest methods of producing fire. Our Philological Society of Washington, under Colonel Garrick Mallery, took up this subject, and on a thorough scientific investigation found out and reported that although the expression was very ancient, yet it could not be assigned to a period as early as the cosmos, for the Creator did not in the beginning "Strike a Light," but said: "Let there be Light." However, Virgil, in the *Æneid*, refers to the tinder box method for obtaining fire. This establishes very great antiquity for the tinder box, and we have also the text of Cicero in "Treatise De Natura": "*Lapidum conflictata atque tritu slice igneum videmus.*" All this goes far in fixing the use of the tinder box in classical times.

We remember the old tinder box with great distinctness as an indispensable appurtenance of the household in our youth. No house could be sustained without it, and so complete and sudden was the revolution retiring it that it is entirely unknown

to the present generation, save traditionally. No greater boon was conferred upon the housekeeper than the invention of the lucifer match. The conservative country people were tardy in adopting it. Although fairly introduced and in common use in the city in 1835, it was not in general use on Long Island in 1838. The reason was probably the expense, and then some accidents had happened through its use, and, again, it was not deemed waterproof.

Some of these old tinder boxes (household gods) were of elaborate construction and ornamentation. There were hundreds of forms, usually from four to six inches in diameter, and some of simple construction, many of which are now preserved in our museums, to which we must resort for a study of them. The material of which they were made was tin or brass. We remember the tinder box as holding the highest rank among household equipments on Long Island. There were no other means by which we could obtain light or fire. "Strike a Light!"

The tinder box familiar to us was neither tin nor brass, but consisted of the crooked, tapering horn of the ox, or some other of the bovine tribe. It was about ten inches long, hollow, and the larger end, which was open, was about three and a half inches in diameter. This was a cumbersome and awkward fixture and it seems strange that, considering the universal use in previous times of wood friction to produce fire, that there were so few improvements on this primitive method and tools. These improvements are compressed into two inventions, *viz.*, the bow and drill and the pump-drill, which are not to be ranked as machines, but rather as machine tools. A machine which combines the parts of the ordinary two-stick fire drill was seen in use on the Nile above the second cataract in 1868. This was a survival of the old friction method; they had not yet reached the tinder box age.

The appurtenances, or equipments complete, of the Long Island tinder box were, first, the horn, then the tinder. The latter consisted of charred, or calcined, or carbonized rags,

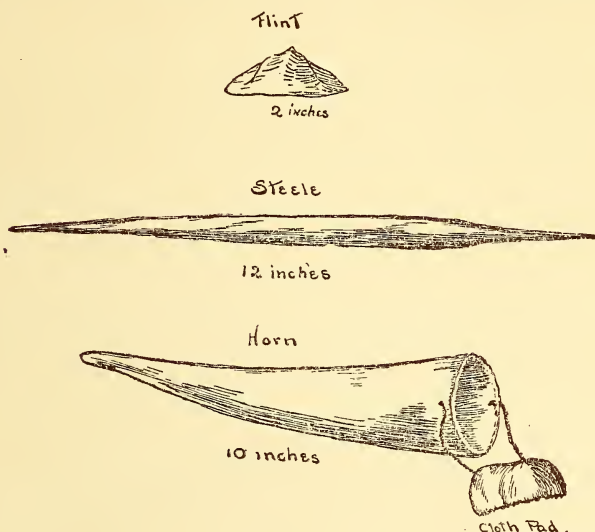


which were placed in the horn and kept stopped when not in actual use by a ball of rags or some other soft material, so that the horn could be closed air tight. A flint and steel were also a part of the equipment. The flint was the same as that used by the common old-fashioned flintlock gun of the period. These flints weré for sale at all the country stores (in fact, a complete outfit could be obtained at any country store). The steel was about three-fourths of an inch wide, one-quarter of an inch thick, and about a foot long. All the above constituted the plain working outfit. There were some outfits which made pretentions to artistic structure, but none probably excelled for convenience the horn equipment.

There was but one method for obtaining fire, and that was by the ever faithful tinder box; and there were but two processes by which fire could be preserved from day to day. One was to bury a mass of live hickory coals in ashes over night, or burn a night lamp or rush taper. The former was frequently resorted to. The latter was a luxurious method and could not be indulged in by the poor farmer or fisherman, to whom the only alternate was the friendly tinder box and the friendly mendicant shaving match.

Down to about the year 1833 the tinder box was to be found as a matter of course in the kitchen of every house in the land. It had been in use for ages and had undergone little or no variation. Yet its disappearance was extraordinarily sudden and complete after the introduction of the friction match. Less than a generation later, almost within a decade, the tinder box had become little more than a vague tradition of the past, and examples are to be found now only in the cabinets of the antiquary. Few other instances of the disappearance so suddenly of a domestic contrivance so ancient can be cited. To attempt to trace the origin of the tinder box is futile. The very name comes to us from the early ages, for the obsolete English root verb *to tind*, or *to tindle*, meaning originally to kindle, or to set on fire, comes from the old Anglo-Saxon, with *tyndan* having the same signification. But the tinder box is vastly

more ancient than Saxon times. Long before iron was known in the smelted form, nodules of iron pyrites, such as were often found in chalk, were used with a piece of flint and some kind of tinder to produce fire. Evidences of such have been found in the Swiss lake dwellings and in British Barrows.



The tinder box varied infinitely in shape and size and material, though identical in its purpose. In bedrooms and dressing rooms they were of superior material and structure, brass, copper, tin, and sometimes silver. The steel was of myriad forms and shapes to suit the fancy of the factor. The horn tinder box was for common, everyday use. It was handy, but one of more elaborate structure decorated the kitchen mantel piece. In our house it was made of tin, with a socket for a candle on the lid, and was about five inches in diameter. There were some made of wood, with a compartment to hold the steel, flint, brimstone matches and candle.

The Dutch tinder boxes, those brought from home, were all wood, and some were ornately and elaborately carved, real works of art. There were many of these among the

Dutch settlers. The imported English article was always metal, and all with some pretensions to ornamentation. One of silver, belonging to the Searing family of Hempstead, we saw in the possession of Dr. Lewis Searing. It belonged to the plate of the Searing family. The structure was plain, burnished and without ornamentation. The Searing tinder box was exhibited at a show of antiques at Hempstead in 1866 or 1867.

The expression, "Strike a Light," as uttered at the school meeting, brought up no other vision but of the tinder box. Without going into detail, the tinder method of striking a light is the earliest known to us, save that of our still more remote savage ancestors by the friction of two pieces of dry wood. Ethnological science has made this method too well known for further illustration. The Eskimo obtained light by striking pieces of quartz and iron pyrites together, directing the spark to fall upon moss dried and prepared for the purpose. This was also striking a light. Among many of the half-civilized races, where the tinder box, or a similar contrivance, is used for obtaining fire, as in Siberia, the name in their language is synonymous with "Strike a Light."

## CHAPTER IV.

HISTORIC WHITE OAK TREE.—CAPTURE OF THE SCHOONER L'ARMISTAD.—INDIAN SHELL HEAPS.—INDIANS OF LONG ISLAND.

*Friday, March 1, 1839.*



SEVERE winter has closed, superceded by a no less disagreeable and inclement spring, for the weather is still cold and piercing, but the power of the sun has a dissolving effect upon the frost-bound earth, and a few more days we may hope to see stronger evidences of spring. Volumes have been written upon "Gentle Spring," "Etherial Mildness," etc., with but an hypothetical existence outside of the poet's realm.

*Wednesday, March 6, 1839.*

Reports were received here a few days ago that a great freshet prevailed at Hempstead Village. The roads here have been absolutely impassable in consequence of mud for any wheeled vehicle, and communication is nearly cut off.

Subsequently, by special messenger, member of our family, the reports of the flood at Hempstead have been confirmed. It was known that great quantities of snow had accumulated on the Hempstead Plains during the last winter, which had been unusually severe, and the ground was frozen to a great depth. The heavy rains which have prevailed recently flooded the plains back of the village. The waters flowed down the two brooks which run through the village, swelling them to an enormous size. These streams form a union just Southwest of the village and supply the motor power for a series of grist mills. The snow, ice and every other thing that could aid in forming a blockade collected in the swamp at the union of the streams, near the residence of Gid Nicols, and completely choked up the stream, throwing the accumulated waters back upon the village. The water rose to a height of five feet in the dry-goods store of Mr. Weeks, corner of Front and Main streets, and was of equal depth in the shoe store of Mr. Burtis, and in Mr. Crossman's hat store. It was six feet deep on the turnpike. The entire length of Front street was three or four feet under water. Snedeker's lumber yard was all afloat; timely warning saved their horses. Lester Bedell, who lived on the other stream, West of the main village, left his house when the water had risen to one foot on his parlor floor.

When the water broke through the blockade it rushed down with great fury and carried away all the mill dams on the stream, except



Mordecai Smith's, which was saved by opening the flood-gates and emptying the pond before the flood reached it. The damage in Hempstead is said to be considerable, aggregating many thousands of dollars. All the dwellings, shops and stables on the low ground along the streams were flooded and some were carried away. The residence of Isaac Eldred, farmer, northeast of the village, with his farm houses and barns, occupied an island in a lake miles in extent. Floods have prevailed this season all over the country. Some in New Jersey were disastrous.

*Wednesday, July 10, 1839.*

Benjamin F. Thompson's History of Long Island, containing an Account of the Discovery and Settlement, with other important and interesting matters, etc., was this day delivered at our house. It purports to be a complete history of the Island to the present time and was published by E. French, 146 Nassau Street, New York. This is the first book ever published purporting to give a succinct history of Long Island. We anticipate much pleasure in reading this book. Mr. Thompson was many years in the compilation of it, and being himself a Long Islander, he took great pride in his work. He labored for correct information and spared no pains in obtaining it, in the collection of which he was greatly facilitated by his familiar relations with the prominent citizens of the island.

*Saturday, August 3, 1839.*

A very severe thunderstorm came up suddenly this afternoon and lingered a long time at the South of us. It appeared to be very severe on the Ocean just outside the beach, and caused a very heavy tide, and may have done much damage at sea. Its effect was not very great on the land, but was fitful. It was an unusual storm, in consequence of which we have taken cognizance of it.

*Sunday, August 4, 1839.*

During the thunderstorm yesterday the land-mark and historic old white oak standing at the brow of the hill east of our house was blown over. What a history that old Quercus could tell were it endowed with memory and speech, and how insignificant our Reminiscence! It is an immense tree, the largest by great odds on our farm, and probably the largest in the town. Its butt was four and a half feet in diameter. It was a gigantic tree when the first white man set foot on this farm and had endured hundreds of equally violent storms, and it succumbed not from an apparent weakness above ground, but in its foundation. We were familiar with every limb and branch of this old veteran. There was not a bough that we had not explored hundreds of times. We had climbed to its very summit, from which could be obtained a full view of the Atlantic Ocean. This tree was not only noted for its great age; it was a handsome tree. True, its limbs were

crooked, angular and knobby, but they spread out to a uniform length and its outlines were symmetrical. It had given shade and shelter to thousands of creatures. We have seen it absolutely covered by a tumultuous mob of black birds, holding a carnival, and all talking at the same moment. We have seen its branches ready to break under the weight of wild pigeons, every available standing place being occupied. It was a rendezvous for robins, cedar-birds and crows.

The wealth of happiness flowing from this old tree will never be admeasured. It was an ornithological museum of moving forms, an hundred volumes of inedited natural history. It was an object lesson every day in the year. The old tree, maybe, was the survivor of a forest of its peers, but stood alone during our time, my father's and grandfather's.

My grandfather preserved a flint arrow head found under a projecting root in his youth. This spot may have been the scene of an original conflict before the innovation of the palefaces. Among the old stories, or traditions, which are mostly experiences only, of this historic tree, there are preserved no tragedies or comedies. There is an old tradition that the Algonkin had a sort of veneration for the old tree in consequence of it being the haunt of the sacred owl of his theology, and that while people of our day (ourselves included) have a kind of feeling described as creepy when on a quiet evening the startling, penetrating e-ough—e-ough—e-ough of the screech owl bursts from the old tree, which the Indians translated into a warning of evil. We know better, but we cannot help feeling, like the old negro, "that suthim wus goin' to hap'n." It is said that during the Revolutionary war two loyalists, or tories, whose names it would not be courtesy to mention, out of regard to surviving relations, escaped arrest and probably hanging by storing themselves away in the knobby branches of the old oak until the pursuit was over, while others who had taken to the swamp for safety were captured and treated with great severity. The field in which the tree stood had never been under cultivation; consequently all the scars upon the surface earth might be said to remain. There was a well worn path from the foot of the tree over the brow of the hill, a distance of about three hundred feet, to the ruins of an ancient spring at the edge of the swamp. This spring and path were never used by the white man.

No Indian relics were found (save the arrowhead of my grandfather) on or near the premises. There were, however, evidences of fire on the side of the hill from remains of embers, coals, ashes and discolored pebbles and gravel. The fireplace, if such it were, was about ten feet wide, cut into the side hill; the excavated earth had been graded in front, forming a crude hearth. This would seem to indicate that the fire place was in the interior of an enclosure or dwelling, and had been used for heating. However, that form of structure is not conformable to Indian Custom.



The storm which destroyed the old oak was not purely local, was attended with lightning and thunder and began with a little hail, but no rain. The wind did not seem to be exceedingly violent, and none of the neighboring trees bore evidence of the storm. On examination of the fallen tree there had been an effect which might have resulted from a spiral or whirlwind. The fate of this familiar and favorite object of our life is sealed.

In life the old tree stood out a tower of strength. Bleak and defiant on the brow of the hill, it was the most prominent object on approaching the place from any direction. It had survived the greed and avarice of man. It had endured the fury of three centuries of winter blasts. It had escaped the lightning shafts of a thousand thunderstorms, to be uprooted and prostrated by a half developed hurricane, which an hundred greater had failed to disturb. So much of the old monarch as will make proper timber for boat building my uncle, Daniel Smith, will purchase, thus prolonging its usefulness another half century; the remainder will be consigned to the wood pile.

*"Requiescat in pace."*

*Tuesday, August 13, 1839.*

A great fire is raging in the pines near Farmingdale. The wind has come in from the Northeast and we are nearly suffocated with the smoke. Should we get rain, which is very probable, it will put an end to the burning, it is to be hoped. This is the second great forest fire this year in the Long Island woods in the neighborhood of Central Islip and Farmingdale. When this wooded territory is once burned over it is forever after useless as a wood or fuel producer. These forests have yielded hundreds of thousands cords of wood, but since the introduction of coal as a fuel the consumption has not been so great. It is now being used for kindling and for charcoal.

—————, *September*, ——— 1839.

In the early part of September, 1839, great excitement was created on Long Island, which spread over the entire country, in consequence of party feeling engendered, and the unsettled state of the country regarding the matter involved, and with forced party issues. The cause of the agitation was the capture, inside of Montauk Point, by Lieutenant Geding, in command of the United States Brig Washington, of a large schooner named l'Armistad with a cargo of African negroes intended for slavery. It seems that the l'Armistad had sailed from Havana, Cuba, for the Port of Principe with a large number of negroes intended to be sold as slaves.

On an investigation, later, it turned out that during the passage from Havana the negroes had arisen upon the officers of the l'Armistad, all of whom they murdered, and took posses-

sion of the schooner, sparing only the white crew, and two persons who were represented as passengers, of whom one was a seafaring man and had been in command of a vessel, and was qualified to navigate. He was placed in charge by the negroes and commanded to take the *l'Armistad* back to Africa. But he deceived them, brought the vessel into American waters and ran her in at Montauk, where the capture took place. After the capture, which took place without resistance, Lieutenant Geding took his prize over to New London, Connecticut (August 29, 1839), it being the nearest United States port, and delivered her over to the authorities. The negroes were at once put under arrest and locked up on a charge of piracy. The monstrous injustice of this act and the helpless condition of the negroes set the country on fire and the indictment for piracy called out thousands of sympathizers, and some breaches of the peace. A public meeting was held at Brooklyn at which S. S. Joselyn, Joshua Leavett and Lewis Tappan were appointed a committee to raise funds to defend the rights of the negroes. After a great struggle in the State courts their case was taken to Washington and Judge Story of the United States Supreme Court entered a decree releasing the negroes, and granting an order justifying the uprising. But the issues arising were pregnant with party bitterness among the born agitators, which did not subside at once.

During the pendency of the investigations and trial partisans arose among the political parties ready to embrace any opportunity to foment trouble. The two passengers were also arrested and thrown into prison. Complications grew, and the whole country was in a foment. All the old questions of Free Soil, Abolition, etc., were threshed over. The negroes were free, and probably the only guilty parties, the officers of the *l'Armistad*, were dead. The liberation of the negroes and their restoration to Liberia resulted in the foundation of the Mendi Mission, still a living institution.

But the matter was not over; the complications threatened to rupture amicable relations with Spain and the United States.

Spain put in a claim for indemnity with a somewhat belligerent attitude, the false attitude of which demand was shown in the voluminous diplomatic correspondence of Daniel Webster with the government of Spain on this subject. There were questions raised in this controversy between the two sections of this country on the subject of this capture which were never settled until the first gun was fired on Fort Sumpter in the conflict between the North and South.

*Wednesday, September 11, 1839.*

This day was spent in searching and digging for Indian curiosities in the old shell heap in the swamp lot. Owing to the heavy rains which have prevailed for several days past, it was deemed a propitious time to hunt for Indian relics on the surface in open fields and sand hills, in which localities they were not infrequently washed out. The rains not only unearthed many relics; they rendered more conspicuous those lying on the surface.

We were rewarded with a few knives, arrow heads, as Mr. Potter (Pierrepont Potter), the teacher, calls them, all imperfect specimens; that is, having been used and more or less broken, but being probably more valuable to the collector for all that.

On our farm and near our residence was an ancient Indian shell heap. It was on the north bank of a small stream which ran through the farm and was probably at one time the head of tide-water. Evidences of an earth causeway from the stream over the bog to the shell heap and more solid ground still exists and testify to long-continued use.

At the period of the entries in this journal these relics of ancient shell heaps over various parts of the country were just beginning to attract the attention of the antiquary and scientist. We shall here (this being the work of later years) attempt to throw some light upon the relics which so much interested us when a boy, and which interest became much greater as we advanced into manhood.

There was nothing remarkable about the shell heap spoken of to distinguish it from thousands of others all over the world except that it was inland (they usually occur on the margins of bays, lakes and rivers), and being inland, indicated

that it was the site of an Indian settlement, or near a village. When the Indians were interrogated by the early white settlers about these remains they said they were very old and were there when they came. They were undoubtedly the accumulations of many generations, and showed stratification, or seemed to have been deposited in layers. This may be accounted for on the theory that the Indians did not continuously remain here, and that during their absence, sometimes for years, maybe, in consequence of tribe hostilities, the deposits became covered with soil, upon which, on their return, were again deposited a layer of shells. That the authors of the shell heaps were a migratory people, or carried on a traffic with distant tribes, seems plausible from the fact that copper axes of rude structure were not uncommon among the finds on this part of the island. These axes evidently came from the Lake Superior district, inhabited in early times by the Algonkin, to whom the Long Island Indians were blood relations. There are four such copper axes in the Long Island Historical Society Museum, found just east of Rockville Centre, in a group of twenty surrounding another copper axe, two feet below the surface. They seem to be associated with some superstition. Three of such, or similar axes, were found at Rockville Centre and two at East Rockaway, their sizes being respectively 6 by 3½ and 7 by 4 inches, and were also deposited in said museum.

Chisels, axes, and mauls were also found on Long Island, the material of which came from a long distance in the interior. There have been spear heads found on Long Island, for which there was no known service. They were a foot long and three inches wide and were probably brought here by Indians from a distance, and may possibly have been medicine spears, such as were common with the Oregon Indians of the Pacific Coast.

It is evident that the tribes of the interior regarded this part of the coast, with its numerous land-locked bays and water thoroughfares, as an ideal location for their summer



encampments, added to the temperate climate and the inexhaustible supply of fish and clams, the abundance of fruit and every variety of aquatic wild fowl, as well as the larger game, with which the forests abounded, made Long Island a desirable camping ground for the Indian. Many came from the North and West, from beyond the Alleghanies, and the positive testimony of my great-grandfather is that down to his day Indians occupied locations on the farm every summer and engaged in clamming and fishing, but retired in the winter. He said report showed that in 1701 the Indians had already diminished in Hempstead and other parts of Long Island; the only locations where they held their own were on the south side at the necks convenient to the bay.

It has elicited much surprise that so productive a country and so bountifully stocked with food animals as Long Island was, supported so small a population of human beings as were found here at the time of the discovery, but it probably had all that it would sustain of savage or half-civilized races. In fact, there are good reasons for believing that the aboriginal population was never much, if any, greater than when the white man first landed. We can readily perceive how a race in possession only of instruments of the stone age, and who were preyed upon by enemies which threatened and enfeebled them, must necessarily make slow progress in population, or in the arts of civilized life.

There was, however, a gradual elevation among them, but it was along their lines and not those of the white man. These people drew their subsistence almost entirely from the spontaneous productions of the earth, seas and forests, and when these sources were drawn upon above their natural producing capacity a dearth in such products inevitably followed, and a consequent falling off in the supplies of the population; but after a readjustment had taken place and an equilibrium restored, that is, the supply equal to the demand, the result was again harmonious.

But so soon as the white man appeared permanently, with



his devices for subduing nature and for the capture and destruction of animal life, the equilibrium was again destroyed. He made heavier demands upon nature, which nature could not supply, and diminution began under his improved methods of agriculture, the forests melted away, and the haunts and means of subsistence of animal and game life to disappear.

This was equally true of the waters. The Indian had never captured beyond the increase and the greatest amount of animal life was maintained. Soon after the appearance of the white man, whales ceased to visit our coast. Seals, or sea dogs, once existing in great numbers in the South Bay, were annihilated, and the fishes began to become scarce, and many varieties entirely disappeared, and from that time to the present the civilized population increased and improved means for destruction were invented; in just such ratio did the food supply of the sea decrease. So, we believe that the maximum population, drawing its support from unaided nature, had been reached before the advent of civilization, and which just maintained an equilibrium between demand and supply. This routine is not by fixed and constant laws, but undulating. An extremely dry season affects herbivorous animals; a long and severe winter destroys whole tribes of wild game, and similar causes may affect aquatic products, and years may be required to restore the former conditions, maybe never.

There is nothing in the method or culture of the shell remains on Long Island upon which to hypothecate that any other race than the American Indian, such as survived to our day, had ever occupied this territory, that is, no race of superior attainments in the arts of civilized life.

The implements found here, arrow and spear heads, axes, mortars and sinkers, were found everywhere along the South side. Rude ovens, fireplaces, cinders and charred shells, bone needles, or awls, for making their bark boats and garments, the arrow and spear heads bore no evidence of any other race or higher civilization.

Again reverting to the shell deposits on the farm, they

were not in mass, that is, not in one heap, but in several, as convenience dictated. They, the Indians, having no design or order in their arrangement or distribution. When they first arrested our attention, they had been much scattered and covered a piece of ground equal to an acre.

*Friday, September 20, 1839.*

Went out to the bay yesterday with my father. This is a favorite recreation of his and many entries of similar excursions might be made in this journal, at the risk, however, of being tedious. On the way out we pass many Indian shell heaps bleached as white as snow, which they much resemble at a distance. Some of them on the banks of the creek extend from fifteen to thirty feet upon the bank and under the water, in many instances entirely across the creek. These shell heaps, long ere this, had excited our curiosity and we had proposed all manner of questions concerning their authors. These questions my father did not and could not satisfactorily answer, and we were consequently unsatisfied, and hence there was a constantly recurring inquiry. My father is greatly interested in these shell heaps, their contents and their authors, and especially the one on our farm; and he was pleased to observe the interest manifested by us. He had preserved with great care all arrow heads, stone axes, bones of animals, and, in fact, everything found which might indicate the handiwork of man. He knew these shells to be the remains of Indians who had inhabited this and the surrounding country and who were now fast becoming extinct, and he therefore neglected no opportunity of preserving any relic which might possibly throw light upon their origin, or history. He did not accept all the current and common theories concerning them. He made a broad distinction in the causes which resulted in the remains, such as were found on the farm, and those of the more extensive mounds nearer the ocean, and more directly on the shore adjoining the fishing ground of which we have spoken. The former, that is, on the farm, were, he claimed, the remains of clams opened for food for family use and should be classed as refuse heaps (Kitchen Middens), while the latter were the remains of, or chips of, wampum manufactories. His conclusions were reached from careful observation and exploration of the heaps. A large percentage of the shells on the farm had never been broken, while on the other mounds a search failed to reveal any whole shells. And, again, among the shells found on the farm, conspicuous were the skimmer clam shell (*macra solidissima*). From the latter shells found in their kitchen refuse heaps it is evident that the Indian had no such prejudices as the white man of Long Island regarding this mollusc, by whom it was considered inedible. None of these shells were found on wampum heaps. The shells of this clam were used by the Indians in working and hilling their corn, and subsequently by the whites as skimmers in

taking the cream from the top of the milk; hence the name of skimmer shell. There were also found fragments of the winkle (*fulgar carica*). Broken specimens of the hinge of the scollop (*pecten irradians*) were also found in quantities sufficient to lead us to believe that this luxurious mollusc formed no inconsiderable portion of their food.

In the manufacture of wampum, only a small portion of the shell of the hard clam (*venus mercenari*) was used, to obtain which every shell must be broken, this being unnecessary in the case of those opened for food or preserving for family or clan use. There was a prevailing tradition among the old people of the neighborhood that this shell heap on our farm was the remains of a great tribal feast, or pow-wow, at which a gigantic clam bake was served to thousands of braves who were guests of the Algonkins, the participants being Leni Lenapes, Pequots, Iroquois, Delawares, Creeks and the Narragansetts, and at which feast the presiding half-deity Manetto of middle Long Island was the central figure. That such, or similar, feast was held there may be true, but that one feast resulted in so vast a deposit of shells cannot be true; there were shells enough on this field for forty such feasts. It may have been the locality for an annual, bi-annual, or tri-annual feasts of confederate tribes, and some color is given to this theory from the fact of the stratification of shells, or alternate layers of shells and soil, as if there had been a lapse of time between the depositions. Be that as it may, we know all that we shall ever know on this subject; the ground has been so thoroughly threshed over for new facts that nothing remains to be discovered.

In many respects the country in this immediate vicinity appears to have been one of great consequence to the aborigines, of which the number and extensive shell deposits lying within a circuit of two or three miles, the vast number of arrow heads and other implements of savage industry which have enriched archæological museums from this locality, is abundantly confirmatory.

There is an extensive deposit of these broken shells at a place called the Hummocks on the south side of Long Beach Run, west from New Inlet. These remains extend over an irregular piece of ground probably one hundred and fifty feet in diameter, and on the water side slope down into the water with perfect regularity at an angle of about 45° to the depth of thirty feet below the surface. Many stone sinkers were found here.

There is another extensive heap on Swift Creek, about one and a half miles east of the latter and northeast from Jones Inlet, and near the famous resort for sporting men known as John C's.

There are other remarkable remains at Squaw Island, about one and a half miles east of the last named in the bay at Oyster Bay, and opposite to Fort Neck, a beautiful and fertile tract of land jutting out into the South Bay. It was on this piece of ground, Fort Neck, that the most noted battle of Long Island between the Indians and whites

took place. The Massapeguas, Merikoes and Patchogues had erected a stronghold at this place, determined here to make their last grand resistance against their warlike neighbors. In 1653 a man of unenviable fame, Captain John Underhill, made an unprovoked attack upon this stronghold. Before hostilities commenced the Indians removed their women and children to Squaw Island, which is presumably the island above mentioned. The battle was the fiercest and most stubbornly contested ever had on Long Island between the Indians and the whites, and ended in the total defeat and cruel and inhuman slaughter of the Indians. It is said that three hundred perished in this battle, and the burial place of the great chiefs is still marked by a mound enclosing an acre of ground.

John Underhill was born in Warwickshire, England, in 1596. He came with John Winthrop and his 900 emigrants to Boston in 1630. His wife, Helena, was a member of Old South Church in 1633. She was the mother of John Underhill, 2d, baptized 1642. He died at Southold, L. I., in 1658.

But the most extensive shell deposits are at Milburn on Tredwell's or Hick's Neck Creek, down which we sailed today. There are several on each side of the creek. One large ridge on the upland west of the creek is from three to ten feet high and is said to be composed entirely of shell deposits. This ridge is a series of shell mounds, the most extensive probably in this country, far excelling those of Saint John's River, Florida. It is not unlikely, says Benjamin F. Thompson, in his History of Long Island, that all the largest shell heaps on Long Island are the remains of wampum manufactories. Next, in bulk and importance, to those of Hick's Neck above named, probably the most extensive wampum manufactory in the United States was at Bergen Island, King's County.

The remains at Hick's Neck Creek are also of great antiquity, judging from the trees now growing upon their surface. The Indians who had become extinct only within the memory of persons yet living ascribed these mounds to a former race. This ridge or series of mounds is at Bedell's Landing on the west side of Hick's Neck (Milburn) Creek at a point where the creek turns easterly. There is another on the East side of the creek about two hundred yards distant on a piece of meadow now belonging to Jacobus Golden, where the creek turns suddenly southward, and still another one at Miller's Landing a few hundred yards southwest of the latter, where the creek turns southeasterly and debouches into the bay. All of these are interesting and important remains. Sinkers, spear heads and other implements have been found in all of them.

We made an opening into the ridge at Bedell's Landing, and found the shells pervading to the depth of six feet, and we had not then reached



the bottom. In fact, the currents at the bend of the creek had undermined and exposed a section of the ridge at this point and the shells appeared to be ten feet deep. The wagon road from Bedell's to Lott's Landing, a distance of about eight hundred feet, is on the top of a ridge and is composed almost entirely of shells and black earth, the result of decomposed animal matter.

All the shells found in these mounds, so far as our research extended, and the condition of the shells would warrant, belong to the order quohog. Excavations made along the ridge for the purpose, among other things, of removing the shells for fertilizers, yielded unsatisfactory results of the remains of man, only a few arrow heads (National History Department, Long Island Historical Society).

Notwithstanding the strong evidence of the great antiquity of these shell mounds and the universal acceptance of them as the remains of wampum manufactories, we cannot quiet doubts arising in our mind that the Indians ever engaged in any system of organized labor; they seemed to be incapable of the mental and physical concentration.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE INDIANS OF LONG ISLAND.

*Sunday, September 28, 1839 (Continued).*



HE shell heap on our farm, as has been stated, was at the head of canoe navigation on the stream which is a branch of the Hick's Neck (Milburn or Lott's) Creek, and about three miles from the bay, or clamming ground, and was probably the center of a village community.

My grandfather said that in his day many Indians and half-breeds (some are still living there) had become fairly respectable farmers and had conformed to a great extent with the English mode of life. There are families of half-civilized natives who lived in the neighborhood the year round in communities consisting of twenty to thirty who seemed to have survived to better conditions. They were a peaceable, quiet people, would not beg, but would steal when pinched by hunger. They occupied little patches of ground which they tilled and which some of them owned; others were squatters. They fished and picked berries in summer, and trapped in winter, made baskets and made the nets of fishermen.

The great staple earth products of the Indians were maize and beans, from which we have succotash, also samp-porridge, pure Algonkin words. They were also great berry eaters and during the summer the huckleberries, grapes and particularly the wild cherry, contributed largely to their subsistence, although there was an abundance of game. The domiciled Indians laid in stores of nuts, the hickory, chestnut and acorns, the latter of which they made into a kind of flour paste and baked it.

In reverting to the communities spoken of by my grandfather, it illustrates the clannishness of the Indian, a state of society out of which he had only half evolved, although he had

reached the status of a village dweller. If a village community occupied the spot near the shell heap on the farm in times prior to the innovation of the whites, and the consensus of opinion is that they did, then such residences must have consisted of long houses, known in the Algonkin as *hokensots* (long houses), and occupied by from four to six families each, some of the dwellings being eighty or ninety feet long. This was the method of the Algonkin in the structure of their dwellings. A cluster of such structures constituted a village with a permanent population. While little doubt remains that even in these early times there was a great influx of native population to this part of Long Island in the summer, yet the permanent population was considerable. The emigrating population lived in wigwams and tents of transitory structure. The permanent village population, although barbarians, had reached that stage toward civilization distinguished as tillers of the ground; they had a government, paid taxes or tribute to support the power which protected them.

On the arrival of the English, this tribute was paid in wampum to the Pequots and Algonkins of Massachusetts. *The Annals of Hempstead*, by Onderdonk; *The Antiquities of Hempstead*, by Onderdonk; *Thompson's History of Long Island*, and *Furman's Notes* are works to be consulted by the inquisitive in matters concerning Long Island in colonial and pre-colonial times.

We find the Algonkin represented as dwelling in great numbers on the necks of the south side of Long Island. He appeared to be the earliest human occupant and as natural a product of the soil as the wild beasts of the forests, with whom he contended on equal terms "the right to be." He had none of the luxuries of life, from our point of view, but he was contented, indolent, improvident and happy. His wants were few and simple, all of which were supplied by the spontaneity of nature; his greatest anxiety was for his next dinner.

The Indian of Hempstead prior to the advent of the English settlers was not a savage; he had advanced a long

way beyond savagery. He dwelt in communities; he had an unwritten code; he was an agriculturist; he had a currency; his sachems derived their power from the people, popular will. But notwithstanding all this, he could not hold against the white man's civilization, and his decline dates from his first contact with the white man.

Let it be understood that the Indian, prior to the advent of the white man, was quite a different thing from the degenerate being of the period of our ancestors. The processes historically of his decline are fragmentary and incomplete, and to fill the hiatus, his historian has resorted largely to speculation. Here for nearly two hundred years, or up to the period of the dissolution of the last pure Algonkin, two forces were at work, and processes operating in the presence of each other—one an inferior civilization going out, and another, a superior coming in, or supplanting the former. They did not in any marked degree merge or mix. There was no distinct class created, a result of mixture, as the mulatto, the combination of the white and negro. The Indian as a rule could not reach the plane of the white man's civilization and he continued Indian to the last.

Of the stages along the line of ascent or descent we now know nothing; we have the result—annihilation. The detailed processes which marked the downfall and extinction of the Indian are not of history. All the records we have of the Algonkin at Hempstead South, all that is left from which we are to gather his sad history, and upon which to affirm even his existence, are here and there an earth mound and shell heap of doubtful chronology, a few flint arrowheads and now and then legislation by state and town enactments with evident intentions to save him from his impending fate, but all in vain. Physiologically, here and there in the present generation his characteristics survive in the high cheek bones, straight black hair, almond eyes, dark, sallow complexion, a general unthriftiness, and an indifference to the higher methods of civilization. From the public documents and from private

testimony it would seem that the early settlers in the Town of Hempstead made every effort to treat fairly with the Indian. There is abundant evidence in our possession that my grandfather and great-grandfather had much sympathy for the Indian. All of which, of course, was from the white man's point of view, *viz.*, to raise the former to the status of the white man, and prevent the latter from sinking to the status of the savage. The former was difficult to accomplish, the latter difficult to prevent. The Indian was required to substitute for his habits of life those of the white man, and with a large portion, and especially the influential class of whites, every effort was used to make this result as easy as possible for the Indian without compromising the white man or his civilization. There is abundant evidence that there were many white men ready to lapse into savagery.

The following excerpts of laws concerning the Indian passed in 1664 and at various times subsequently at the general assemblies, or town meetings, at Hempstead, L. I., are given to show the consideration of the people for the Indian in his helplessness, and also to protect him against the rapacity of designing men and to elevate him, to all of which he seemed so indifferent. No history written at the present day could give more truthfully the true relations between the Indian and the white man than these random extracts from the Laws of the Freeholders of the Town. The following are extracts only of these laws:

"No purchase of lands from the Indians after the first "day of March, 1664; shall be esteemed a good title without "leave first being had and obtained from the Governor, and "after leave so attained the purchaser shall bring the Sachem "and right owner of such lands before the Governor to acknowledge satisfaction in the payments received for the said "lands, whereupon they shall have a grant from the Governor, "and the purchase so made and prosecuted is to be entered "upon record in the office, and from that time to be valid to all "intents and purposes."



"All injuries done to the Indians of what nature whatever shall, upon the complaint and proofs thereof in any court, have speedy redress gratis, against any Christian in as full and ample manner (with reasonable allowance for damage) as if the same had been between Christian and Christian."

"No person shall sell or give or barter, directly or indirectly, any Gun or Guns, Powder, Bullet, Shot, Lead, nor any Vessel of Burthen or Row Boats, Canoes only excepted, without License first had and obtained from the Governor's hand and Seal, to any Indian whatsoever, nor to any person inhabiting out of this Government, nor shall mend or repair any Gun belonging to any Indian, nor shall sell any armour or weapons, upon penalty of ten pounds for every Gun, Armour, Vessel or Boat so sold, given or bartered, five pounds for every pound of powder, forty shillings for every pound of shot or lead, and proportionally for any greater or less quantity."

"No person shall, from and after the first day of September, 1665, directly or indirectly, trade with the Indians for any sort of furs without license first had from the Government, which license is to be renewed every year at the Governor's pleasure remained if he shall find just Exceptions."

"No person whatsoever from henceforth shall Sell, Truck, Barter, give or deliver any Strong Drink or Liquors to any Indian, directly or indirectly, whatsoever known by the name of Rum, Strong Waters, Wine, Brandy, Spirits, or any other Strong Liquors under any other name whatsoever, under the penalty of forty shillings for one pint and so proportionably for greater or lesser quantities so Sould, Bartered or delivered, as aforesaid. One third part of this penalty to be to the informer. Provided always that it is and shall be lawful by way of reliefs and chanty to any Indian in case of sudden extremity, sickness, faintness or weariness, to sell or give to such Indian or Indians the quantity of two drames



"and no more of any such Strong Liquors as are afore-mentioned. Provided also that the Governor by License may Authorize any person to sell any or all such Strong Liquors to Indians upon Security taken from the person Licensed for his or their good behavior."

"In all Places within this Government the English and all others shall keep their cattle from destroying the Indian's Corne in any ground where they have right to plant, and if any of their Corne be destroyed for want of fencing, the Town shall make satisfaction and shall have power amongst themselves to lay the charge when the Occasion of the Damage did arise. Providing that the Indian shall make proofs the cattle of such Town of — farms or Person did the Damage. And for the Indian's encouragement towards the fencing in their Corne fields such Towns, farms or Persons where cattle may annoy them that they shall direct, assist and help them in felling of trees, striving and sharpening Railes and holling of Posts, allowing one Englishman to three or more Indians, and shall also draw the fencing into place for them and allow one man a day or two towards the setting up of the same. And either sell or lend them tooles to finish it, provided that such Indian shall fence their Corne fields or ground at their own expense. And if any Indian shall refuse to fence their Corne grounds (being tendered help as aforesaid) in the presence and hearing of sufficient evidence, they shall keep off all cattle or loose their damage."

"And if any harme be done at any time by the Indians unto the English to their cattle, the governor or his deputy with two of the counsel, or any court of sessions or assize, may order satisfaction according to law and justice."

From the very nature of things the Indian could not survive a contest on lines parallel with the white man. He was not fitted to survive such an ordeal.

In the struggle of civilized life a stored-up energy, or something laid up for a rainy day, in treasures, capital or other available assets, may bridge the possessor over a period

of dearth, or exempt him from the possibilities of sudden and immediate want. The individual may lose his employment, his health and even his friends, but he may be sustained by the storage of force, at least to span or cover a period of the reign of violence.

The Indian civilization made but a weak provision, or none at all, for such contingency, not enough to ensure him his next meal. He consequently deteriorated rapidly in the struggle with the provident white man, and a few years reduced him below the refuse of white society.

By the destruction of his hunting grounds the Indian was deprived of his means of support under his system and enforced upon him the customs of a civilization which he despised. He therefore lapsed instantly into mendicancy; he had not the flexibility of character to adapt himself to the new environment, the provident methods of the white man, and having no reservoir of stored-up energy, nothing laid up to draw upon during the interim, or emergency—the inevitable resulted.

In the government of the tribes each tribe held sway over a territory with fixed boundaries, distinguished by a stream or trail; sometimes stones were set up marking tribe boundaries. When at peace no tribe would encroach upon the territory of another with any but friendly intentions. They would not pursue animals over the boundary. Out of these well-defined customs and laws of the Indians grew a vast amount of trouble when the white man became possessed of the territory of the tribe. We showed no respect for the Indian custom. There is no doubt much trouble could have been avoided had the whites recognized native rights as the native saw them. The Indian could not enforce his rights; he submitted to force. The quotations from laws on a former page show a magnanimous effort to assist the Indian,—but it is all White Man.

One of my grandfathers (a public man) made a state-

ment in a private communication concerning the Merikos Indian in the early day of his degeneracy, in 1692:

"He is always," said he, "under your feet when you have "no occasion for him, and never to be found when wanted. "He tills little patches of ground, but we have to plough them "for him and lend him a hoe to work them, and then he will "go to sleep and let the squaw do it. The South Side Indians "are too worthless to live, but not bad enough to be hanged."

"One day when the thermometer was down to zero," said my grandfather, "an Indian squatter on my place applied "for an armful of wood to keep him from freezing. I "pointed," said my grandfather, "to a tree and told him to "cut it down and use it for firewood. The Indian said he had "no axe. I lent him an axe, and he went to his hut, rolled himself up in his blanket and laid down, choosing rather to freeze "than work."

"The Indian youth," said my grandfather, "although of "full blood if brought up in white neighborhoods, is an improvement on the old evil. Indian boys are not disliked by "white boys, in fact, they are rather favorites, and white boys "were more frequently found defending the Indian boy than "one of their own blood. They frequently married into white "families; very few whites married squaws. These facts are "attested by our ancestors."

You could not satisfy an Indian by fair and generous treatment because he did not know what generous treatment was, from his point of view; we looked at it so differently. An Indian captured in war expected torture and he thought you a fool, and lost all respect for you, if you released him. This is a rule to which there are many noble exceptions of record.

When the Indian exchanged large tracts of land for two or three old flintlock muskets, two pounds of powder and shot to match, an old broad-axe and two gallons of rum, a monstrously unfair exchange, but he went away rejoicing at the cupidity of the white man. Bargains of this kind, however, had to be readjusted sometimes.

In the *Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1660* by Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter, edited and translated by Hon. Henry C. Murphy, there is a careful description of a house of the Nyack Indians of Long Island. This was a typical residence of the tribe from Maine to Georgia, and which corresponds probably very closely with those of other parts of the Island, and especially with Merikos.

"We went from hence," said he (Dankers), "to her habitation, where we found the whole troop together, consisting of seven or eight families and twenty to twenty-five persons, we should think. The house was low and long, about sixty feet long and fourteen or fifteen feet wide. The bottom was earth, the sides and roof were made of reeds and the bark of the chestnut tree, and were sometimes covered with mats. The posts or columns were trunks of trees set firmly in the ground and all fastened together. The top or ridge of the roof was open about half a foot from one end to the other in order to let the smoke escape in the place of a chimney; this could be closed. On the sides or walls of the house the roof was so low that you could hardly stand under it. The entrances or doors at both ends were small and low so that they had to stoop down and squeeze themselves through. The doors were made of plaited reeds with flat bark. In the whole building there was no stone, lime or iron. They build their fires in the middle of the room on a platform of the floor. Each family has its own apartment with separate fire. All those who live in one house are generally of one stock or clan or descent. The interior of the house was comparted at intervals of six or ten feet, leaving each chamber entirely open, like a stall upon the passageway which passed through the center of the house from end to end.

"In these dwelling or wigwams some provisions had been made for the future; they contained a storeroom for nuts, corn and other provisions. There was a plentiful supply of furs upon which they slept at night, or which were hung up as a lining to their houses to make them warm.



“The Indians were found in possession of many of the  
“useful arts. They possessed the art of striking fire, of mak-  
“ing fish nets, of making the bow and arrow with the sinew-  
“string, of curing and tanning skins, of making wearing ap-  
“parel, moccasins, of making rope and nets from filaments  
“of bark, of finger weaving of woof and warp, of canoe mak-  
“ing of skins, birch bark and dug-outs, building lodges, shap-  
“ing stone mauls, hammers and chisels, of making fish spears  
“and bone hooks, and music flute and drum.”

The Long Island Indians possessed a form of government and clearly defined social and home institutions which seemed to regulate their domestic affairs. But it must be remembered this was the Indian before the white man came; that with the first contact with the white man degeneracy and decay began, and there is a vast difference in the Long Island Indian in his native state and the Indian as we know him.

As to their religion, we believe the high religious sense which it is said existed among them is a pure fiction of the historian; it had no status. At revival meetings held at the south side at Hick's Neck we observed that among the people of the Neck those most susceptible of religious emotion were those who were suspected of being of Indian descent, and that they, with few exceptions, lapsed into their former indifference when the pressure was removed. As far as they reached, if it can be said that they reached in religious ethics at all, was a distinction between a good Indian and a bad Indian. A good Indian was one true to his friends, who served his tribe faithfully, supported his family and had killed many enemies. The reverse constituted a bad Indian. No future reward or promise of future reward entered into the religion or ethics of the good Indian. The moral idea of goodness in an Algonkin was faithfulness to his chief and a successful warrior.

One of the greatest superstitions of the Indians of this part of Long Island was their veneration for the Owl and the Hawk, their totems, and they must be conciliated.

If the great White Owl should alight near the village, of



an evening, and hoot loudly, it would be regarded as an omen of displeasure and the Sachem would at once assemble a council of head-men and determine upon a proper propitiatory offering. He must be placated by blood or wampum.

But the Owl, while held in such high esteem by the Algonkins, was held in great abhorrence by most other nations. As early as the age of the Mahabhratta and Ramayanna it was an evil genius with the Hindoos; it was an ill omen to the Romans; the Latin poets show great prejudice to it; Virgil calls it an omen of mortality; Lucan stigmatizes it; Pliny calls it a funeral bird, and Shakespeare calls it the ominous and fearful bird of death. The Owl takes high rank with all the races of low civilization or barbarous peoples, all of whom regard it as a symbol of great wisdom, while the more civilized peoples have deserted the owl and accepted the goose, who is confessedly an animal of great stupidity.

When the Indian mixed and intermixed with the negro they appear to have become extinct, but evidence of Indian blood and characteristics are still distinctly traceable among the white inhabitants of the Necks. What we mean by characteristics is complexion, straight hair, high cheek bones, and general unthriftiness. When these are combined in the individual it is pretty certain that Indian blood prevails. We can enumerate twenty respectable families who four generations ago one side ran into pure Indian.

The aboriginal American of Long Island, or the American Indian, before his contact with the white man in his native state, has been ill understood and grossly misrepresented. He had been pictured a naked savage, cruel, treacherous and revengeful, without government or laws; whereas instead of living in an unorganized state where each man is a law unto himself, these people lived under an organized government, rude indeed, but essentially advanced above the conditions attained by the savage in other parts of the world. Their social system was very ingenious and complex, being based largely upon kinship ties, and was well fitted for the state they had at-

tained. They had made some considerable advance in political confederations for defense and to wage war against a common enemy.

The great outrages said to have been committed by the Long Island Indians were almost to a case in retaliation for some real or imaginary outrages said to have been committed upon them by the whites.

The Indians of the south shore of Hempstead were never really hostile to the white settlers. True, they sometimes felt aggrieved when punished by the courts for small offenses, but their complaining was never rebellious and did not disturb the white settlers in this part of the town. Especially were the resident Indians of the Hooks thorough friends of the English and fairly good faith and conduct were maintained by both in their dealings.

It was the neighboring Indians who made the trouble in trying to stir up insubordination. The Canarsie, Maspeth, Flushing and the Indians on the north side were the principal aggressors and they were as hostile to our resident Indians as to the whites. On no part of Long Island were the Indians more fairly treated than here, and there are rare instances of gross unfairness.

The Indian would not steal unless pinched by hunger, at which crisis he had no conception of it being wrong to help himself out of anybody's crib or smoke-house when hungry, and, according to Indian ethics, it was no wrong. He would help himself to poultry, sheep and pig and any kind of vegetables upon which he could lay his hands, for which offense, under our laws, it was necessary to punish him, but he always felt that he was wronged when punished and complained bitterly of the injustice, but he was never known to complain of being cheated out of his hunting grounds (which was a more grievous wrong) unless put up to it by some white man.

The Long Island tribes, when they first attracted the attention of the European, had long passed the savage state and were apparently a happy, contented people. Each tribe had its

own Sachem, raised by the tribe and invested by them with office, and his realm was marked by well-defined geographical limits. They were agriculturists and village dwellers, and they were all members of a confederacy. Not only was this an alliance for benefits and mutual protection, but one founded upon consanguinity, bond of kin.

Their Sachems could declare war, make peace, enter into treaties with foreign tribes, receive embassies, etc. They met around the council fire and smoked the pipe of peace in settlement of disputes, or dug up the hatchet in declaration of war.

All the civilized races on earth known to us have passed through these grades on their upward march to civilization, except the Polynesians, and theirs is a degeneracy. The average status of the American Indian under his native half-civilized code was much higher than the white man under his higher civilization, that is to say, he lived nearer to his ideal than the white man did to his. This fact is borne out by the investigations and testimony of learned ethnological scholars who have pursued all the intricacies of aboriginal character, that from his own standpoint, and that standpoint was competent to sustain a state of society without anarchy, that individual rights were as much respected as they were under our own by us. The Indian believed in his superiority, and he had a consciousness that he was no less honorable, no less honest, no less brave, no less moral than the white man, and much more truthful; for all of this the white man's testimony is in.

It matters not what the code of laws which sustains the social and political conditions of a community, or tribe, or nation, so long as such laws sustain them it is entitled to respect. Hospitality to the stranger was upheld by public sentiment with the Indian. If a stranger entered an Algonkin house, food was immediately set before him (remember that in the savage state food was the great concern of life), to refuse which was an affront. If not hungry he must taste and praise its excellence. This custom was maintained by public sentiment among all the Long Island tribes.

At the time of the discovery of America these social institutions possessed a vitality difficult for the white man to comprehend in a race of savages. But the Algonkins were not a race of naked savages; on the contrary, they dressed well in winter and were great dandies in dress. The Long Island Indian was a picturesque character in his native costume, which was far from unbecoming to him, while the white man's clothing was as unbecoming the Indian as the white man's civilization.

Ownership of land, the soil, the fee, or right to convey, was unknown and incomprehensible to the Indian of Long Island, but he could under his law reduce unoccupied lands to possession by cultivation, the right of which was respected and would pass by inheritance. The Indian was never brought to comprehend what advantage could possibly accrue from ownership in land (the fee) since it could not be eaten or carried away, and from his knowledge and method of reasoning it was just as good for hunting purposes under one owner as another. And retrospectively the bitter litigation we have had contingent upon these relations of ownership to transitory game which is attested in our voluminous reports, proves that we were further from a settlement of this question of personal rights than the Indian. His rights had been determined by an unwritten code which by years of application had become the law of the land, better defined than the written statutes of our commonwealth. As to his rights in game, or its pursuit he was unlimited, and its possession constituted perfect ownership, over which there could be no dispute. The bear, the deer, the salmon, the duck and all other wild game no man held ownership in until captured; ownership was not determined by territorial limitations of metes and bounds, and so long as the game remained free upon the wing it was its own owner, and subject to the same laws of surprise and capture as he, the Indian, was. The Indian maintained that his right to fish, hunt and clam was co-equal with the squirrel to the nuts on the trees, or the beasts of prey to their victims of the chase.



We have heretofore referred to the dress of the Indian as a subject of no little ridicule by the white man, but no Beau Brummel was ever more circumspect in the style and make of his garments, or the quality of feathers, quality and quantity of paint and grease with which he decorated himself, than an Algonkin brave when dressed for war, or for the conquest of some coquettish squaw of a neighboring tribe. The purpose of the white man and the Indian in decorating their persons was identical, but their methods differed vastly; but from the point of view of each both were equally ridiculous. We find the same desire for distinction in individuals by their dress existing in all races, and the same desire to dress richly on the part of those possessing wealth or station, for it must be understood that wealth and station had their degrees among the rude Algonkins as among cultured Europeans.

In winter the Long Island Indian dressed in cured skins made soft and pliable and sometimes ornamented with paint and beads made from shells. They sometimes wore a mantle of fur decorated with feathers. They went bareheaded, their hair trimmed fantastically and thoroughly stiffened with grease and paint. They wore leggins of dressed deer skins and boots of leather. To this, in winter, was added a mantle of fur. The women wore one or two leather skirts, otherwise they dressed as the men. In summer they wore little clothing; children went naked.

We are not going into the intricacies of political or social life of the Indian to show how, or why, things were done, but simply to demonstrate that they were done.

The Algonkins maintained a state of society and a government under which they were happy, prosperous and multiplied, without prisons, jails, Bastilles or Bridewells.

But it is said that their methods for the enforcement of law were summary, brutal and cruel. They did not think so, but believed them eminently equitable and just. There was but little detail in Indian justice. No one believes that a pre-Columbian Long Islander would have hesitated a mo-



ment if permitted to select between immediate death and one year in a penitentiary. The true Indian scorned a life which entailed degradation when an honorable death was the alternative.

It was only after the Indian had taken degrees in our civilization that life became sweet to him under any conditions. Taking this question in the abstract, leaving out all details and definitions, the Indian treated crime as a disease of community and his methods were to eliminate it. Consequently all crime was punishable with death; then the cause was removed. We compromise with it, try to cure it, and adopt a graduated scale of punishment according to what we consider to be the enormity of the offense (that is, as it ultimately affects society), but the cause remains.

Now, if naked results are being sought, regardless of all other considerations, the Indian was undoubtedly right. We cannot shield ourselves under the plea of inhumanity of the Indian method, for in that respect between his and ours the difference is one only of degree. A death penalty is inhuman; so is one year in the penitentiary. Many a grand larceny has affected a community for ill more than some murders.

This reasoning is an apology for the Indian under his iron-clad environment, not a plea for the adoption of the Indian method; that, whether good or bad, would be absolutely impossible under our environment, so that all sentimentality is wasted in considering the subject. We cannot fence in reservations to preserve an antiquated civilization; progress cannot be stayed for humanity's sake on the plea of sympathy; nature is remorseless, unrelenting and aims at nothing but to glorify the future. The Indian must fill the bill, or perish.

But had other methods been pursued with the Indian, more humane and less natural, had our ancestors utterly extinguished, instead of fanning, that remaining spark of Puritanism brought from Europe, had they sought for merit and worth in manners not their own, in the social and political

system of a people who lived under so little government—so little law—so little crime, without anarchy—without jails, as the Long Island Indian, had they adjusted their civilization to an Indian code of morals, results might have been different. Had our ancestors taken more interest in this people and their institutions and temporized with them, results might have been more beneficial to white man and Indian.

It is well known, however, that all efforts to civilize the Indian from the white man's standard have thus far aggregated in failure, and in all the instances where the Indian has accepted, or adopted, our habits, customs and mode of living, he had lost all the characteristics for which he was admired in his wild state. The white man's vices were placed before him in a more attractive form than his virtues. The Indian lived, fed, clothed and housed himself from those materials which came readiest to hand and which were obtained with the least exertion on his part. This want of ambition, or ability to contend on new lines familiar to the white man, led to his decay and final extinction, or absorption, and nothing could save him, as thousands of communities of civilized white men have perished under a reversal of conditions.

The Indian men are hunters and warriors; when old, counsellors, for all their government is by counsel of the sages. There is no force; there are no prisons, or officers, to compel obedience or inflict punishment. The Indian women till the ground, dress the food, nurse and bring up the children and preserve and hand down to posterity the memory of public transactions. The employments of the men and women are accounted natural and honorable.

The full-blooded Indian, even when he has fully adopted our customs and mode of life, seldom becomes a valuable or desirable member of society. There are noble exceptions. The half-breeds were very much better than the full-bloods. There are many respectable families of Coe's Neck and Hick's Neck and vicinity who can boast aboriginal blood.

In our youth an old Indian, probably of the Merikos

tribe, dwelt on my father's farm. He was a squatter. His dwelling was a miserable device for a house; it had but one room and a wretched garret. It was located in a clump of dense cedar trees. The only evidence of civilization about the place was a large pear tree in front of the hut, which came there by accident. In this miserable place he lived with his wife, a white woman, less ambitious, if possible, than himself. To her credit, however, it may be said that she would work. She did washing and cleaning for the neighborhood. This old Indian belonged to a past generation; he wore fringed leggins and a coon-skin cap. He was known by the name of Tom; he had never had any other name, and he did not really require it. He was utterly indifferent about it himself; he had never been baptized, could not write, had never owned any real estate, paid no taxes, so altogether, another name would have been wasted on him, as no monument was erected to his memory.

There was plenty of good land surrounding Tom's hut which he could have had to cultivate for the asking, rent free, but he preferred his miserable hand-to-mouth method of living to that of respectably earning it. There was no such thing as thrift in the Indian code, and no such sentiment as earning a living in his philosophy. Thrift was the exception, for wherever the Indian blood prevailed unthriftiness prevailed.

They improved generation after generation as the blood became diluted, but it was constant in proportion to its purity, and would crop out at intervals amongst the most thrifty. There were, however, noble exceptions to this general rule. There were thrifty, respectable families of nearly pure Indian blood.

Tom was not a drunkard, but he indulged in more than was good for him of firewater. Now, with all that has been said of Tom, he was an honorable man, a sympathetic, kind man, always ready to do a favor, and when done as a favor would scorn compensation; in fact, possessed qualities which would have been ornamental to many men in higher stations.

Tom was of royal blood, being, as he claimed, a relation of the Sachem Wantagh of the Merikos, and thus lived and died this prince of the royal house of Wantagh.

Tom had a son who had followed the bay from childhood during the summer, and he went to school in winter at the district school at Raynortown, where he reached the attainments of reading and writing. His Christian name was James and he went by the name of Jim Tom. He grew up perfectly familiar with boats and boating in the bay, and finally became the captain of a packet sloop belonging to my uncle running from here to New Brunswick. He was a trusty man and rendered valuable service to my uncle, in whose service he remained many years. He married a white woman from Patchogue and moved to New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he reared quite a family by the name of Tom, some of whom we have been informed attained to positions of prominence and respectability and acquired considerable means. Our knowledge of James Tom ceased when he moved away. We can, therefore, say nothing positive about the advancement of the family, but there is no doubt about it, James Tom was a great improvement on his father. We remember James Tom very well; he was a typical half-breed, with strong Indian characteristics. He was indolent, but he had some white pride in him, which would sometimes assert itself and he could not reconcile himself to his father's savage mode of life. Unlike his father, he did not indulge in drink.

"The Long Island Indians in their present degraded condition," says Benjamin Tredwell in a letter to the Governor of Connecticut in 1747, "wear but little clothing, and that of the coarsest and commonest kind. Their dwellings are of no general structure, anything that can afford them shelter. This, however, like most other customs, is not true of all of the resident Indians. Some of them who reside in or near communities of the English permanently on little pieces of ground, which they own and cultivate, occupy neat little cottages, and



an air of thrift and cleanliness surrounds them." All of this, however, is in great contrast with the average Indian.

*Thursday, September 26, 1839.*

All the aboriginal inhabitant Indians and their descendants of the south side of Long Island were familiar with the sea and skilled in the management of boats. John Winthrop testifies that there were canoes on the waters of Long Island that could carry eighty persons. My grandfather said, and it is borne out by tradition, that a great many of these Indians occupied in summer the west side of Milburn Creek, south of Lott's and Bedell's Landing, and that there also was a permanent settlement there and that the great shell mounds at these places were the result of extensive wampum manufactories before the innovation of the white man (1658). The most extensive shell heaps in the country are to be found in this neighborhood and but little doubt remains that a great deal of wampum was manufactured on the south side of Long Island. A tribute of sixty fathoms was once imposed upon this people.

Wampum was introduced into New England in 1641, and in 1673 it had become the circulating medium everywhere east of the Mississippi. The superior quality of that manufactured on the south side of Long Island and between Rockaway and Patchogue was so marked as to be noted in Winthrop's Journal. The purple was twice the value of the white wampum. In 1641 a city ordinance of the Director General Keift deplores the depreciation of this primitive currency. "A great deal of bad seawant, nasty, rough things imported from other places, was in circulation, while the good, splendid seawant was out of sight, or exported, which must cause the ruin of the country."

Wampum was made on Long Island for exportation as late as 1830. There were many inferior kinds. In later times the manufacture was taken up by speculators, who made it by machinery. This soon occasioned its depreciation and it passed out of general use, but will ever remain a curiosity and a memorial of the aborigines.

Whatever may be the result of future investigations, it is pretty conclusively established that the head center for the production of wampum was Long Island, and probably the Algonkin was the originator, the name being in the Algonkin



language, *viz.*, Wampumpeag; the Dutch called it seawant. The literature of wampum would fill a volume.

The great body of historical evidence goes to show that currency in shells was in use among the Atlantic coast tribes when first encountered by the white man. Thomas Morton says: "The Indians of New England back in 1630 had a kind of shell in strings which they used instead of money. It was of different values and of different colors. But it had other uses than money. The wampum belts are the most interesting wampum productions, and the importance they held in great and ceremonial assemblies is extremely interesting."

There seems, as before stated, but little doubt that Long Island was the principal locality from which the shells were gathered of which wampum was made, and that the vast shell heaps which we have referred to were the refuse of the wampum industry. It is impossible from any known records or traditions to demonstrate an approximate antiquity for the use of wampum among the Algonkin tribes. It is not probable, however, that a custom so unique and so general could have grown up within the historic period, nor is it probable that a practice foreign to the genius of a tradition-loving race could have become so well established and so dear to their hearts in a few generations, and yet it has no tradition.

The Mayas of Central America were ages in developing the phonetic system of their pseud alphabet. The Mexicans had an ancient system of picture writing. The Peruvians and the Chinese had a system of knotted cords known as quipos (with the Peruvians), and the Algonkins had their wampum, all of which were more or less imperfect and distinct methods of recording events, or of rendering them permanent.

The distinction to be made between string wampum and wampum belts is that a belt is composed of a number of strings. Both the string and belt wampum were used for personal decoration of male and female. The belt wampum was also used to assist the memory and in recording events, and both

were also used as money, with a fairly well established value as compared with other standards.

All of this is demonstrated, for we find it named hundreds of times as consideration in whole or in part in the purchase of real estate, and in other transactions between the English, Dutch and Indian.

There were many things which the Indians in their primitive state might have used to represent values, and we can only account for the use of beads on the theory of their intrinsic value. John Jacob Astor is said to have carried tons of wampum west with him for traffic with the natives of the Pacific Coast (Furman's Antiquities).

From all that is known upon this subject the inference is that up to, or nearly up to, my great-grandfather's time, or about one hundred and eighty years ago, those shell heaps were still in process of formation, which may in some respects throw doubts upon the great antiquity claimed for them; but in exploring them one is struck with the evidence of great age of the lower strata of the shells and the vast period of time which must have elapsed between the first or bottom stratum and the last deposit.

It has been held and believed by many observing residents of the place that a large Indian village or settlement once existed at or near this location of the shell heap on our farm. This was my father's notion, hypothecated upon the fact that here was a tract of ground consisting of many acres which had been deforested in very early times; the existence of so many spots of burnt earth which he thought might have been fireplaces; then the finding of charred wood, and the generally prevailing tradition that the natives had a large settlement at or near this spot; but we know of no graves or burial places, so necessary an accessory to a compact community; no bones or skeletons were found in the immediate vicinity. More recently, in 1869, we explored the mound and from it and other sources obtained a few unimportant relics, all of which have been deposited in public institutions.

The material generally of the spear and arrowheads was of flint and quartz (pebbles), such as occur at various localities on Long Island, as at Flatbush, Glen Cove, Westbury, Bay Ridge and Montauk Point, in the Glacial Drift. Some of them have been made of quartz-rock, such as is found in sites on Manhattan Island; the axes and hammers were made of various kinds of sandstone. At the period of these finds ethnology was just becoming a classified science in this country, and geology was beginning to assume a recognized position in physical science.

On digging near the center of the mound the deeper we went the more decayed and friable became the shells. Small pieces of bone, not identified, were also found, with, however, no evidence of the handiwork of man appearing, and at the depth of two and a half feet the shells ceased altogether. They rested upon a hard gravel resembling that in other parts of the field, except that the gravel was black, being stained by the decayed animal matter. We confirmed the statement of my father that none of the shells had been designedly broken and that it was, consequently, not a wampum manufactory. The mound showed stratification, or intervening layers of soil. This no doubt came from not using the same spot consecutive years. So firm and compact were the shells that the digging with a spade was extremely difficult.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE GEOLOGY OF LONG ISLAND.—SHEEP PARTING.—ANCIENT LAWS IN REGARD TO SHEEP HERDING.

*Thursday, September 29, 1839.*

**I**F it be true, as stated by Dr. Gale in his Geological Lecture (in 1838) on the Ice Age, of the vast effect of the glacial epoch—epoch of ice—upon the topography of the earth, and especially upon the contour and altitude of Long Island, then it would be well for us to familiarize ourself with the subject, because it seems to us that the theory of Dr. Gale, if applied to territory upon which we are engaged, might throw a vast amount of light upon some heretofore unexplained effects, the cause of which to the present is a profound mystery. In due time we shall look into the new science of glacial action and apply it to our little territory of Long Island; there is apparently so much good sound common sense in Dr. Gale's reasoning upon the new ice theory, and that to the glacial activity may be charged many of the incongruities of the surface of Long Island.

The glacial theory solves many problems mysterious to us when a boy. The brook which ran through the farm, upon the banks of which was located the shell heaps heretofore referred to, had evidently once been a stream of considerable volume, for since our childhood it has much shrunken, the far greater portion of its ancient bed being absolutely dry. We have traced the stream to its ancient source, the base of the hills traversing the length of Long Island, and which are the terminal moraine of the glacial age. The course and ancient bed of the stream can be traced with as great certainty as if the water was still flowing through its channel. The erosion by the current having been very great had worn the earth away to a depth of ten feet and had left gently sloping banks composed entirely of glacial drift on either side. There are also bottom lands evidently once covered by water, the accumulations of vegetable matter on these bottoms record the natural history of the territory



through which the stream ran. There is no essential difference in the character of the work of erosion done by this little stream, except in magnitude, and the great Mississippi. All the characteristics which mark the lake basins and ice dams of the great lakes of the Northwest we find, in miniature, and all the features which mark the Algonkin beach of Lake Huron are here.

Near the shell heap or at the point heretofore designated as head of canoe navigation, and three or four hundred feet distant up the stream to the eastward, the stream passes between two considerable elevations about two hundred feet apart. These hills in early times were connected and continuous across the stream and formed what is known as a glacial dam; a lake about a mile long was formed above the dam; its shore lines are still distinctly traceable. For some cause this dam gave way and emptied the lake, and the material which formed the dam was carried down with the flood and deposited, and can be positively identified, about three hundred yards down the stream.

The drying up of this and other streams on Long Island presents to us a vast field for research and speculation. It would seem that the drying of these streams was caused by a gradual rising of the land, but there is abundant evidence that around the margins of Long Island, especially the south shore, the land is sinking. These lands were anciently covered with forests, all of which have long since disappeared, mostly through the instrumentality of man, some by the encroachment of the sea, the remains of the last named forest can now, in many places, be seen under the overflowing waters.

That such movements are taking place on our earth has been demonstrated by Lyell. And Professor Hitchcock has shown that subsidence is taking place on Long Island, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod, in his geology of Massachusetts.

The drying up of the stream may have resulted from one of two causes, the clearing away of the forests and land

cultivation, or upheaval of the land. The latter of which does not seem to be soluble upon this immediate territory, we mean the question of subsidence, or upheaval, we must *consequently* try issues elsewhere.

Since the last mentioned period, the glacial, the old Atlantic has persistently contested her sovereignty over the territory of Long Island; slowly but surely she is winning it back, and the time will come when she will again command to the base of the hills where she reigned 280,000 years ago.

In geological time this period is not far remote. As an evidence of the truth of what we have just said, we have only to observe the insinuating progress of the south beach upon the bays and marshes skirting the southerly rim of the upland of Long Island. It is not an uncommon thing to find a mass of marsh out in the very breakers half a mile from any other marsh land, which has, so to speak, passed under the ridge of beach hills and is now breaking up on the ocean side. These changes which have and are now taking place on the Hempstead Beach, near or in the vicinity of what was formerly known as New Inlet, have been enormous. All the openings or inlets through the beach are gradually working their way westward, while the general tendency of the beach or strand is inland, and in some places it moves quite rapidly, and hills now cover marsh lands from which men now living have harvested hay.

New Inlet, where the channel was formerly sixty feet deep, is now entirely closed, and sand dunes, thirty feet high, occupy the site. A thousand acres of flats once spread out in front of White Hill, on the south side of the east channel or run. These flats were formerly famous soft-shell clamming grounds. Many barrels of clams were taken from there at every low water. The flats were covered at high water, and they, with the hills bordering upon the ocean on the south, are now entirely washed away and a considerable depth of water exists there.

Our first recollection of New Inlet (so called because

it had newly broken through the sand hills) was when it was in direct continuation of Swift Creek. It has worked westward to the White Hills and then it still continued westward until opposite Sea Dog Creek (so named from the sea dogs taken there in early times). The current of the flood tides from the ocean was very rapid and it dredged this creek out to a great depth, and also widened it, and Sea Dog Creek became the principal outlet to the ocean, as Swift Creek, about one mile easterly, and White Hill or Long Creek had formerly been. These localities were also famous fishing centers, the deep water making them the resort of many varieties of fish. Sea Dog Creek was famous for kingfish and weakfish. Swift Creek was noted for sheepshead, striped bass, blackfish, black-bass and porgies; many other varieties were taken in these and other localities. Long Creek had many fine fishing grounds. Scow Creek was noted for its flounders. Probably no locality on the Atlantic coast of the United States was stocked so abundantly and with such variety of molluscs, crustaceans, vertebrates and invertebrates of the sea as this immediate portion of the Great South Bay of Hempstead, Long Island.

The portion of Long Island under consideration possessed a large aboriginal population, on the basis of savage populations scientifically estimated, *i. e.*, means of subsistence.

The necessities of life were here produced in abundance and there was no region where subsistence was more easily procured. In all such localities the largest development of population would naturally be found.

The hunt or chase is an uncertain and precarious means of maintenance, and for many reasons the supply is sometimes cut off; the food supply for game may be scarce, in which event it seeks other fields. Concerning the supply of fish, molluscs and crustaceans, however, it is quite different; the bay and ocean nursery is always profuse and unlimited.

The herding of the barbarian in early times on the necks of land jutting into the bay had its counterpart in the rush

of the white emigrant for these localities; they immediately invaded these territories. Rockaway, Hick's Neck, Coe's Neck, Raynor's Neck, and all along the south side to the Hamptons were filled up long before a foot of the interior or territory between what is now the south road and Hempstead, or Middle Island, was occupied by settlers. The obvious reason was the same which concentrated the Indian population there, the ease with which the means of subsistence could be obtained from the bay during the tedious period of clearing up the forests and bringing the soil to a condition to remunerate their labor, and the country supported a vastly greater population of civilized men than savages. Their improved methods of agriculture, use of firearms and the metals, gave civilized man a vast advantage over the savage.

Returning to the old diary, the entries followed pretty regularly from the last entry down to the present, consisting, however, mostly in reference to books we had read, with extracts and comments preserved to aid the memory. The storehouse of books from which we drew were limited almost exclusively to "Harper's Family Library," kept in the district library at Raynortown, Willet Charlick being the librarian. Mr. Charlick was indefatigable, and we may enter a tribute to his memory, in his efforts in getting books and placing them in the hands of the young people of the district to create a love for reading.

*Friday, October 20, 1839.*

The historical literature of Long Island has a narrow range, limited to a few books only. Silas Wood's *Sketch of the First Settlements Upon Long Island*, and Benjamin F. Thompson's *History of Long Island, An Account of the Discovery and Settlement, etc., to the Present Time*, is the list of books at our command upon the subject. The former was published in 1828 and the latter has just been issued, 1839.

These two works cover important fields in the history of Long Island, but are vastly wanting in that interesting and gossippy detail which is the charm of local history and which is to be gathered only when there is a profuse literature to draw from in oral legend or printed records. These works, considering the limited amount of material to which their authors had access, are marvels of reliable information.



We have also some historical sermons and orations useful in their way, but too special to be available to the historian. We also have *Furman's Notes*, published in 1824, but they relate chiefly to Kings County and Brooklyn. The above works have begotten a thirst in us for more of the details of Long Island history, to obtain which involves laborious research amongst the town and county records and appeals to private papers and documents and to the unwritten traditions and legends with the experiences of the oldest citizens.

All these sources must be exhausted, and Thompson in his pioneer work has given satisfaction and laid out the field for his more elaborate successor.

*Tuesday, October 15, 1839.*

Went with father this day to the sheep parting to bring home our sheep that had been turned out on the plains last spring.

The Hempstead Plains is one of the most marked features of Long Island. This tract of territory, being sixteen miles in length and containing sixty-four square miles, has a prairie-like appearance, and it is the common pasturage ground for the town of Hempstead. By a strange misconception the soil was deemed by the early settlers too poor for cultivation, and yet the secretary grass grew in some places to the height of four feet. In 1670 Daniel Denton says: "There is neither stick nor stone, and it produces very fine grass, which makes excellent good fodder for winter, but it is more especially valuable for pasturage."

Sheep raising was followed from the earliest settlement of the town of Hempstead. The sheep were branded or marked and pastured in common upon the Great Plains. This common pasturage was carefully guarded, as shown by an act of June 17, 1726:

"To prevent the setting on fire or burning the old grass on Hempstead Plains, done by certain persons for the gratification of their own wanton temper and humors, an act was passed and a committee appointed to take charge of this matter and with power to arrest all persons whom they suspected of mischief. Captain John Tredwell, Mr. James Jackson, Mr. William Cornwell, Nathaniel Seaman, Benjamin Seaman, Obadiah Valentine, Thomas Williams, Peter Titus, Henry Willis, John Pratt, Caleb Carman, Nathaniel Townsend, John Tredwell, Jeremiah Robbins, Thomas Powell, Samuel Jackson, Thomas Seaman and John Mott were appointed such committee to enforce the law against transgressors."

The sheep parting was a very simple institution on its first introduction in this country. But on Long Island, in consequence of the great interest taken in stock, it became a great public doing.\*

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\* Att a general Town meeting, 3d day of April, 1733. It was by unanimous Voate agreed and determined by the freeholders of ye Sd Township that all sheep belonging to them shall run at larg on the plaines without molestation and have free access to all the commons, and that if any parson or parsons Shall at any time drive the said sheep so as to fold or to pen, or Shall by wais

Sheep were not introduced in the town as early as cattle. In 1643 there were not over sixteen sheep in the whole colony of New York. They were fed on the great plains under the care of a shepherd, whose directions were not to let them go over half a mile in the woods for fear of being lost, or destroyed by wolves. No one was allowed to take away any, even his own sheep, from the common flock, or kill it but in the presence of two witnesses.

Every owner had an earmark for his sheep, which was recorded in the town books. These marks were bought and sold; ingenuity was exhausted in devising new ones. There were sheep stealers who have been known to alter these marks. In the fall the sheep were pounded by the pounders into pens agreed upon at the town meeting. In 1710 the pens were at Isaac Smith's, at Herrick's, at another time at Success, perhaps by reason of the convenience of having water at hand. After the sheep had been pastured on the plains during the summer, on an appointed day in October or November, the owners met for the parting.

On April 1, 1845, the town meeting appointed the last Monday in October for sheep parting. The sheep tenders severally arose early on that day and commenced driving in the sheep from the outskirts of the plains to a large central pen, then each owner selected his own by the ear mark and

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Intice them into their fields or inclosures, that the parson so offending shall be prosecuted or sued for every such offence before any Justice of the peace by the parsons hereafter named in the behalf of the said Town, and out of the money arising from the damages, given by the said Justice on these suits or prosecutions the parsons who sue or prosecute in the behalf of the Town for such trespasses or damages shall be paid for their trouble and Charges in prosecuting the same, and it is further voated that Peter Titus, Thomas Williams, John Jackson, Junior, John Smith, rock Senior of the north side, John Dosenboro of forsters meadow and Isaac Jarman shall be the overs to take care of the Sheep, to prosecut for said trespass or offences, and they are desired to be very diligent in the discharg of their trust, and it is also voated and agreed that no rams be turned out or suffered to run at large on the said plains or Commons from the first day of August next untill the first day of October next. The services rendered by any citizen in keeping coarse wool rams from the flocks on the plaines will be paid by Col. Tredwell, who has money in his hands for that purpose.

This voat to be in force for the year ensuing and no longer.

Liber D, page 453, Town Records.

put them in their individual pens. This process was continued until all the sheep were taken out; but if some yet remained without a claimant on the last day they were sold at outcry to the highest bidder and the proceeds went toward paying expenses.

The sheep parting in the fall is of historical interest. It was the great holiday of the times. Here rogues, thieves and bullies congregated, creditors came in quest of debtors, dealers and traders of all kinds advertised their wares, horses were swapped and scrub races had; betting, gambling, drinking and fighting were in the order of the day's entertainment. To counteract these numerous evils, the town enacted a law that there should be no tavern or selling of liquor at the pens.

There seems to be no good reason why so many people should congregate at the Sheep Parting, except, like sheep, one goes because another goes. It took place on the open Hempstead plains a little southwest from Westbury. Permanent pens had been erected upon the ground in which to confine the sheep while they were being reclaimed, otherwise there was not a structure, shed, tree or particle of shelter of any kind upon the territory proper on which this omniverous fair was held except the temporary booths and tents erected by tradesmen and showmen.

There was a vast number of people gathered at this bleak and uninviting spot, summing up into the thousands. To natives of Queens County who had resided long from home, sheep parting and camp meeting were occasions to meet and greet old acquaintances, reunions—not that they had either sheep or religious purposes to serve, but a fairly excusable object, the social. Everybody went to sheep parting and camp meeting. But with a large percentage, sheep parting was simply made the occasion for a great frolic of the masculine persuasion. The number of those who came for the ostensible purpose of the fair, or sheep parting, was comparatively small, and they generally transacted their business and went home; the fun followed. All the princes in small gambling were there, from Sam Wait and Nick Searing, with their sweat-cloths, to New York thimble riggers and experts at three card monte, and a limited number of representatives from the light-fingered fraternity.

In eatables and drinkables the commissariat was ample for any contingency. Patty Ann Wright was there with cake, gingerbread and vivant beer; oysters, watermelons by the wagon load. There was hot

corn, a traffic monopolized by the darkey, and served with scrupulous neatness.

Among the amusements there was a troop of lofty tumblers, clowns, harlequins and pantaloons, whose wit and flexible bodies were marvelous exhibits.

But the most attractive, best patronized and most creditable sporting feature of the fair was the dancing, foot-racing, leaping and wrestling matches. These sports were carried on with order and decency by persons who were lovers of athletics. This was by far the most manly and respectable feature of the show. Officers of the law maintained order.

The fat woman, who weighed four hundred pounds, more or less, and the skeleton man, who weighed only sixty pounds, less or more,—the former in a tent, the latter in a covered wagon. The purveyors of the two last itinerant marvels of human phenomena stood at the doors of their respective institutions proclaiming in Thrasonic voices the merits of their *products*. All for one shilling. The above by no means exhausts the bill of fare.

It being now near the fall election, the politicians also made sheep parting the occasion for putting their goods on the market, and ventilate their righteous purposes of reform and expose the rascality of the other side. (A matter susceptible of easy proof.) A little outside of the main show ground, or aside from the sheep pens and on another part of the field, a stand had been erected by the Whigs on which was displayed a large poster, "Opposed to Selling the Marshes and Plains." Year after year propositions had been made, plans submitted and voted upon at town meetings, and committees appointed for dividing the common lands of the town, all of which, for reasons, failed in fruition, but it was nevertheless made a campaign issue when its agitation was likely to affect the popular vote. Not more than two hundred feet distant from the stand was another platform erected by the Democrats. At these two stands were holding forth respectively William McNeil and Bernardus Hendrickson and other local spoilsmen upon the great national questions of the day, and the merits of their party candidates for the November election.

Some go to sheep parting for business, some for social intercourse, more for fun. The programme of entertainment is so extempore, varied and impulsive that one who goes for coarse fun can hardly fail of finding some agreeable comedy or comic tragedy. The ostensible purpose of sheep parting, originally participated in only by farmers, was to collect their sheep, which had been corralled by the keepers, and drive them home to house them for the winter, and fully and particularly set forth in the acts of the General Assembly of the people.\*

\* At a Town Meeting held in Hempstead, the first Tuesday in April, 1768, the following resolution was adopted:

Whereas it has been the practice for many persons in this Towne to Drive ye Sheep feeding on Hempstead plains up into private yards in many parts of



Stock raising, and especially sheep for their wool and mutton, was followed by the people of the town of Hempstead from the earliest settlement and has been continued up to the present, but the census shows a decline in the number of sheep raised for the past few years. Great care has always been observed in the management of the common lands, the plains and the marshes, so important a factor in stock raising. The earliest record we have of stock tenders was in 1658, when William Jacocks and Edward Raynor were appointed by the General Assembly of Townsmen to look after the cattle and sheep on the plains and preserve them from thieves and wolves. And we believe these offices have been filled at the town meetings or General Assembly to the present. One of the great enemies of the farmer to sheep raising was the wolf; eternal vigilance alone prevented whole herds being destroyed by them. My grandfather said it was his impression that there were but few wolves on Long Island prior to the introduction of the sheep industry. The wolf's sense of smell is very acute and he will smell a sheepfold miles away. They come over in the winter on the ice of the East River or Sound in great numbers and the following season great havoc was made among the sheep, although great efforts were made to destroy them. A bounty of twenty shillings\* a head was given to every one destroyed, but they seemed to fill their decimated ranks every winter and there was little or no diminution to their numbers or depredations. Renewed efforts, however, on the part of the town officers soon had its effect and they began to decline. The wolf became very bold and ravenous when pressed by hunger, and numbers are the instances in which he invaded the farmyards in winter and carried away

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the Town in order to Separate and pick out their own perticular Sheep from day to day Sometime before the day fixed for a general parting, whereby the flock is so Scattered that people are put to Much Greater Difficulty in Collecting them together than if they were let run to the day of General parting, to prevent which for the futer the Major part of the freeholders assembled at this Town Meeting do Make the under Mentioned Orders, that is to Say that ye general parting of the Sheep Shall be held in the fall of the year on the first Monday in November Yearly, and that after the parting is over in the Spring of the Year No person Shall Drive up Any Sheep in Order to pick out their Own until that day, and then in no other place but at the public Yards in the Town Spott of Hempstead, under the penalty of Twenty Shillings for Each offence, and the persons hereafter Named, or Either of them, are Chosen to Sue for the Said fines and when Recovered to pay it into the hands of the Church Wardens for the use of the poor.

*To Wit:* Benjamin Cheesman, Isaac Hendrickson, Ben Gildersleve, Jos. Hall, Carmon Rushmore, Justice Jackson and Peter Titus.

At the Same time, Timothy Clowes and Silvanus Beadle was chosen to Sell Such Stray Sheep as no Owners Appear to Claim at the time of parting.

\* It is ordered and concluded upon at a general towne meeting held on the 19th day of May, 1663, That any inhabitant of this Towne that shall kill any wolfe or wolfes within three weeks' time from the day above written and within four miles of the Towne, hee shall have twenty five shillings paid him in Corne for every wolfe he killeth; But after the said three weeks' time be expired they are to have but fifteen shillings a wolfe in Corne.

young sheep. These attacks, however, became less frequent and finally ceased altogether. But during their reign many hundreds of sheep were destroyed by them and they sometimes attacked young cattle.

Sheep parting, as they say nowadays, is ancient history, a back number. It is, however, replete with incident and method of our ancestors, highly illustrative of their lives and times. To the interested reader not reared under the shadow of the old custom, an explanation may be required not included in the foregoing transcript from the journal written over sixty years ago.

First: It is a survival of an old Friesland custom or enactment. When the townspeople had grazing rights in common to the unappropriated land or common lands, we find in their old law provisions for a cow-herd or calf-keeper, whose duties were precisely those of the keepers appointed at the Hempstead town meeting. This old Norse custom or law was found by our American ancestors to contain useful provisions for their model.

But the office of cow-herd was never so important a trust in American as with our Norse ancestors, whose herds and flocks constituted their almost entire possessions. *Consequently* its provisions were less rigorously observed and enforced here than in its homestead; but it had degenerated along the whole line of descent until at the present time (1900) all we have to show for one of the most significant customs of our Norse ancestors is the modern pound keepers. As an institution of the town of Hempstead the keeper dates from colonial days or the earliest English settlement.

It is well known that the Hempstead Plains was, prior to the purchase of Alexander T. Stewart, common lands of the town. It was territory reserved by the original, or in the original grants or patents, to the inhabitants of the town for pasturage of cattle and sheep, and in the early days of the colony thousands of cattle and sheep were pastured there. The further privilege was granted to every freeholder of cutting grass on said plains. The commissioners of high-

ways were required to keep open the means of access to the public watering places, and for the purpose of looking after the interest of freeholders who patronized the public lands; officers were elected at the annual town meetings or town assemblies. A great portion of the acts passed related to sheep, cattle and the common lands.

But the sheep. Farmers engaged in sheep raising and wishing to avail themselves of the public privilege of turning their cattle and sheep upon the public lands were required to adopt a device to the end of proving their ownership in the event of any dispute at the sheep parting. As before stated, this mark was cut in the ear of the animal.

There was a period when wool raising in the southern portion of the town of Hempstead was among the industries of the day. Every farmer or planter had his drove of sheep, and to some extent his drove of sheep was an index to his capacity or extent of his plantation. So marked had this industry become that a capitalist by the name of William Clowes built a woolen factory at Milburn, on the site of the old grist mill. A great many hands were employed in this factory, men and women. Here the wool for the country about was carded, spun, woven and fulled into cloth for consumption. We remember the old factory; it did not pay and was discontinued and the grist mill reinstated by Daniel Terry, a millwright. The wool factory, which was a large building, was moved or turned around and made to face the south road and converted into a hotel and so remains today.

The wool industry and sheep parting on Long Island are things entirely of the past. Yet from the little Long Island beginnings the wool industry of the United States has become the greatest in the world.

Wool growing has been at various times and by various acts fostered and protected by Congress until it has grown in the southwest to gigantic proportions. The wool factories of the United States are now working into fabrics five hundred million pounds of wool annually, and nearly three-

quarters of the raw material is raised in the United States and the whole of it is retained in the country for home consumption. Wool raising at the present time is made a special business by those who do nothing else, and the industry, as we remember it of Long Island carried on by farmers having from ten to a hundred sheep on the Hempstead Plains, has grown on the plains of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Oregon and California, to more than forty millions sheep at the present, and the carding, dyeing, weaving and fulling formerly performed on the farm are now done by the finest and most complicated machinery in the world. The Hempstead Plains would not furnish standing room for all the sheep in the United States today.

Our history of sheep does not go back to a great antiquity, considered geologically.

"No unequivocal fossils of the sheep have yet been found in the bone-caves, the drift or the more tranquil, stratified, newer pliocene deposits so associated with the fossil bones of oxen, wild boars, wolves, foxes, etc., as to indicate the coevality of the sheep with these species, or in such an altered state as to indicate them to have been of equal antiquity."

Scientists have directed their attention particularly to this point in collecting evidence for a history of fossil mammals. No fossil core horns of the sheep have yet been anywhere discovered, and so far as this negative evidence goes we may infer that the sheep is not geologically more ancient than man. That it is not a native of Europe, but has been introduced by the tribes who carried hither the germs of civilization in their migrations westward from Asia.

*Tuesday, November 19, 1839.*

Since the election the weather has been very unsettled. It has rained or snowed, and sometimes both, nearly every day. The roads are very sloppy; we consequently have been unable to visit home for nearly two weeks. Should we have freezing weather, which is promised, will go home next Friday or Saturday, to be present on mother's birthday. Uncle Oliver and Nathaniel Ellsworth are expected to be present.



## CHAPTER VII.

NATURAL HISTORY OF LONG ISLAND.—PROFESSOR J. P. GIRAUD, JR.—LONG ISLAND  
ICHTHYOLOGY.

*Friday, March 6, 1840.*



COMET of great magnitude and density, with a tail of enormous extent, made its first appearance in the northern heavens on the 20th of February last, according to the newspapers, and on the same authority, was approaching the earth at the rate of 1,200,000 miles an hour, and they have ever since been treating their readers to a dessert of horrors—appalling disasters—from this harbinger of evil, providing always that the long-tailed stranger running lawless through the sky should come in collision with our dear old mother earth, as some unskillful and bungling astronomer has predicted it will.—(In which event it would bring grief to the comet.) Great alarm and thousands of prayers (which can do no harm) are being offered to avert so dreadful a calamity. The ignorance of the aforementioned astronomer of the theories of Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, La Place or Newton is phenomenal.

Aside from the mere scare there is nothing to apprehend from such a collision of the subtle foreigner, which may be a sister orb in our own stellar commonwealth, and whose orbit, instead of lawless, may be in rigid conformity to law and orbicular allegiance to our central sun. Who knows?

Whatever the constituent of comets, we have the best assurance in the world that it is not one of their functions to disturb the equilibrium of solid matter. (Read the result of Herschell's Long Years in Watching the Heavens.)

But all our platitudes have faded into thin nebula, for it has turned out to be no comet at all. The northern heavens for the past fortnight have been shrouded in a vapory nimbus, more favorable to sensational newspaper speculations than to correct astronomical observation. Hence, these unwarranted rumors. One flash of the clear sky and true science reported that no derelict of the sky had invaded the planitoid universe of the boreal heavens. And the dreaded comet turned out to be only a flushed supply of harmless zodiacal light (phosphorescence or gas). Aurora borealis, entirely impotent of harm. We can never be quite certain of anything told us, even though we see it in the papers.

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1839 — 40.

J. P. Giraud, Jr., a naturalist, occupies the carpenter and wheelwright shop of George Smith at Raynortown for the purpose of collect-

ing natural history specimens, and especially birds of Long Island. Many of his specimens are already mounted, and this old shop possesses peculiar attractions to us, and we are a frequent visitor and have personally supplied many of the bird and other natural history specimens which now adorn the collection of Professor Giraud, for which the professor paid liberal prices to the grubber. He was very kind, and discoursed freely on natural history subjects.

This labor of Professor Giraud resulted in one of the most exhaustive popular works on this subject ever published in this country, "Birds of Long Island," containing three hundred and ninety-seven pages and describing five hundred and sixty varieties of birds.

This professor was fully equipped for his work. He was a member of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York, corresponding member of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, etc., and his plain little book, which appeared in 1844 from the press of Wiley & Putnam, is a monument to his industry and talent.

In his preface to that work he says: "In preparing a list of the birds of Long Island, I have studiously avoided introducing any species that I have not met with, or received from the very best authority an intimation of its occurrence in our locality."

The occurrence on Long Island of many species that are rarely or never observed in other parts of the middle districts, will doubtless appear somewhat remarkable to those who are unacquainted with the locality. But when they examine the map and find that this lengthy and comparatively narrow island extends some distance into the ocean nearly at right angles to the mainland of the continent, containing within its boundaries numerous bays, inlets, shoals and bars abounding in all the various kinds of food peculiar to every species of marine bird, it will not seem surprising that these species, which are more abundant on the higher as well as the temperate latitudes, should, in their wanderings, visit these hospitable shores.

Not only is our section the resort for nearly every species

of water bird found within the limits of the United States, but out of less than five hundred birds now ascertained to belong to North America, two hundred have been frequenters of this famous little island. In fact, no portion of our country of the same extent is richer in resources for the student of natural history or more inviting to the sportsman than this garden of the middle districts.

The Great South Bay, occupying a distance of seventy miles of uninterrupted inland navigation, with its sea-washed shores, abounding in numerous species of shellfish and other fish, doubtless contains treasures yet unknown to the ichthyologist or conchologist. Here is also a field for the zoologist, botanist, geologist and ethnologist. Professor Jacob P. Giraud died at Poughkeepsie; his ornithological collection was presented to Vassar College of that place.

*Tuesday, March 10, 1840.*

Today Uncle Daniel Smith launched a sloop, built by himself during the past year. The launching was attended by quite a crowd of neighbors. The sloop is designed for coasting and traffic and was christened "Plough Boy," being the fifteenth sea-going craft launched from this yard.

In tracing its career, the old "Plough Boy" is still (1904) doing service as an oyster boat. The events and vicissitudes in the life of the old coaster account materially to its great longevity and vitality. Having been once in collision with a Hamilton Avenue ferryboat, being badly broken up and sunk, on another occasion pretty thoroughly burned out. On each of the above and on various other minor occasions the old Boy has been renovated and restored to an extent that little now physically remains save the name, the keel and the model, of the original "Plough Boy," nearly every original timber having been substituted by new.

It is strange, considering its "strenuous life," that the old "Plough Boy" should have escaped dissolution through the popular calamity of shipwreck. But it is not too late yet, providing the old weathered veteran is doomed to an end of

violence; if such, let it be a graceful and dignified shipwreck while in vigorous life. At all events, let us hope that it may be saved the mortifying fate of being dismantled and abandoned, a prey to the teredo, in the corner of some infrequented creek or estuary of the South Bay, an outcast, an impediment to navigation, there to swale with the ebb and flow of the sluggish tide, with hatchways grown up with salt sedge, until final entombment in the accumulating mud and filth of the neighboring sewer. Better turn turtle or derelict in mid-ocean, or perish on some ignoble sand spit, battling the elements, than such a fate—die game.

*Saturday, April 4, 1840.*

From our earliest childhood we have beheld with marvelous admiration the phenomenon of the migration of a flock of wild geese. There are but few Long Islanders who are not familiar with the mysterious annual pilgrimage of the wild goose northward in the spring and his return in the fall.

A flock of fifty of these bulky, awkward winged bipeds in procession, following each other in strict Indian file in an absolutely straight line, with a captain on the right side, about a quarter of a mile overhead, sweeping noiselessly along at the rate of sixty miles an hour, is an interesting spectacle. It is an exhibition of great determination of purpose and a stateliness of movement which commands attention, and even admiration. They appear to be engaged in a great and important mission and all other business has been laid aside until its fulfillment.

On the appearance of a flock of geese, first indicated by an occasional "Honk" of the captain gander, the farmer will suspend work, poise himself on his hoe, scan the horizon until he has located it, and will not resume labor until it has passed out of sight. The man on the road will stop, the carpenter will lay down his hammer, and from the school child to the gray-haired sage, all find a momentary interest in witnessing this extraordinary flight of the wild goose. Yet there is nothing so very peculiar in the sight, or movement of a flock of geese. They travel in a straight line for their destination, and at a great speed, and appear to be wonderfully in earnest in carrying out their purpose. But they are a desperately dissatisfied race; the places they make their homes are alternately too hot and too cold. Consequently a large portion of their time is spent in getting ready (packing up) and moving twice a year.

And many gentlemen and ladies of our northern states who possess the means and can command the leisure—and who do—escape the rigors of our Arctic winters in migrating with a train of family ser-



vants, baggage and trunks to Florida (Ponce de Leon), or some other tropical paradise, have many traits in common with a goose.

On the flight of the goose we hypothecate an early spring, or late winter, but the goose knows no more about the weather than our Brooklyn Heights philosopher, Merriam. For two days past the flight of wild geese has been the most extraordinary ever known in this part of the country, so great as to provoke comment. This fact is attested by the oldest people of the place, and if a cause for this were needed, the following may prove satisfactory:

The wild goose in migrating to his summer habitation, as he does every spring, from his native jungle of the Gulf States to higher latitudes, sometimes tarries on the way, either to obtain rest, or food, or both. The weather for the past four or five days has been cool and large bodies of these birds halted and have been feeding in and about the Chesapeake Bay and other bays on the coast. The weather being agreeable to them, they remained, and with the fresh arrivals of each day they became a great multitude. When the weather suddenly changed to a higher temperature, they resumed their pilgrimage for the same reason and pretty nearly at the same time. This southern exit extraordinary accounts for the great flight which has continued for two days. We saw today ten flocks of geese in sight at the same moment.

The wild goose has great powers of flight and flies very high, just beyond the reach of shot guns. Great numbers have been known to rendezvous in the Great South Hempstead Bay in former times, and when not disturbed by hunters, have remained several days while feeding was good and the weather not too warm. They are very timid, easily frightened, and the discharge of a shot gun would startle every goose within its hearing. It is in consequence of the cautiousness that so few are taken during their sojourn in our waters. The wild goose is very social with his kind and when flying keeps up at pretty regular intervals a honking, with a view of opening communication with his kind below.

But it was our intention to record the account of shooting a goose this morning, but we have wandered off on a wild goose chase, entirely ignoring our original purpose. We went out with our gun this morning fortunately, not for the purpose of shooting geese, but for the small game. In noting the great number of wild geese flying, our eyes fortuitously fell upon two birds entirely distinct from the migrating geese flying directly towards us at a rate of at least eighty miles an hour. They were only about thirty or forty yards high and were coming in a bee line. There was no time for reflection or reasoning upon what were best to do. There was barely time to do it. Quicker than thought our gun was at our shoulder, elevated about forty-five degrees with such precarious aim (or no aim at all) as one takes on such occasions, and fired. One of the birds fell. We are unable to say whether it

was the front or hind bird, but he struck the ground dead about three hundred feet beyond us. This bird was a goose, but of a variety entirely unknown to us. A post-mortem, however, held on the body by some of the oldest and astutest sporting neighbors pronounced it a white goose (*Anser hyperboreus*) of a variety much smaller than the *Canadensis* wild goose and very rare in this country, but common in Norway.

This is our story of shooting a goose which is a case of purely accidental killing.

In the literature of the ancient world the domestic goose occupies an important place. He was the sacred bird of many peoples, and yet he was almost universally recognized as the symbol of stupidity. He was despised by the Gauls and Franks; ancestrally hated by the Italians; was the sacred bird of the Egyptians, Ceylonese, Burmese and Chinese; was worshipped by the Romans, who were very grateful to the goose, and awarded to him an annual festival at the Capitol, for the maintainance of which a large sum was appropriated. Mother Goose stories prevail in nearly all the nationalities of the earth.

The common wild goose of America, *Anser Canadensis*, spends his winters in the gulfs, bays and estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico, from the Rio Grande to Florida, and the entire seacoast, as well as the inland, of Florida. He leaves these quarters in March and early April and journeys northward, not in a solid body, but in detachments. The period of his departure is regulated very much by the season. When warm weather comes on he takes wing. He is not fond of extreme cold, and his summers are spent on the coast of Maine, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Magdalene Islands, and the Labrador coast; the latter absolutely swarm with them. He sometimes visits the interior territory of the Hudson Bay Company in great numbers as far west as Manitoba. He remains north during the summer or breeding season, and starts southward in October. And in the early days, before the innovation of civilized man and gunpowder, the southern shore of Long Island was a great breeding place of the wild goose. The ducks, such as brant, mallards, canvasbacks and teal, are later

in starting for their summer home than the goose, but many of them arrive earlier; the goose loafs on the way.

Since this entry, which has been one of digressions, it may not be uninteresting to wander into the philological realm for a moment. Here we find abundant interesting matter concerning the name of the goose. The goose is known all over the world and his history goes back into the dimmest antiquity. In the Malay or Kawi tongue of the Malay Archipelago, the sacred language of Bali, and from which we believe all other names of the goose were derived, it being the most ancient language, he is known by the name of *gangsā*; in the Bali or Pali, closely allied to the Kawi, *hanza*; in the old Aryan, *hansa*; in Ceylon, *henza*; in Egypt, *Abu-hanza*, or sacred goose, the name being of Malay origin; by the Romans, *anser*; in the Portuguese, *ganso*; by the Spaniards, *ansar*; by the Germans, *gans*; and by the English, *gander*.

These names by which the goose is known among the different nations show its descent and probable origin. Our goose is now up to the philologist for ethnological treatment.

Notwithstanding all the high encomiums bestowed upon the goose by the ancients, the good people of the Town of Hempstead voted him a nuisance, and legalized his assassination.

“Town Meeting, May 5, 1682.

“Att the foregoing townd Meeting it was concluded by the Ma Jer Vote that No Teame Geese should have liberty to goo on the commons. In the townd after the fift of November Next insuing and that it shall be lawful for any Person to shute any they shall find on the commons aforementioned after the time. Perfixed.”

The above was re-enacted yearly.

*Monday, April 20, 1840.*

This day a native, Dave Leinad, accomplished the greatest fishing feat ever accomplished on Long Island, *i.e.*, the capture of a pure American brook trout weighing four pounds, nine ounces. His entire catch for the day was four trout. The aggregate weight was eleven

pounds, four ounces. They were taken with a rod and line from the stream, or creek, below the mill pond at Milburn. This marvelous fish above named was the largest brook trout that we have ever seen—probably the largest ever taken in these waters. It created quite a sensation in the neighborhood when it became known. Many persons were incredulous, but so many people saw the fish weighed that it is folly to raise the question.

The above is copied from an entry in the diary made at the time. Upon this entry and our personal recollection rests the good faith of the story of the big trout. As, however, it is not possible at this late day to produce any further verification, let us accept, or reject, it upon what we have.

It would, however, be a pleasing task to map out to the reader, or to retrospect in words, the famous old trout stream which has produced so many marvels. This stream lies entirely within the Town of Hempstead and was born of the glacial age. When, as a boy, we first knew it, it was surrounded by a heavy forest, of which it is now dismantled, and also much changed by cultivation and the obliterating hand of time.

The volume of water in this stream at the time when we first knew it was certainly twice as great as at present.

We knew the little stream (for such it was, compared to the great trout streams of Maine), every foot of it, and loved it from its source to the ocean, a distance of about fifteen miles in its devious course as it existed in our youth.

We have traversed it in spring when the sweet aroma of the budding dog-wood, the music of birds and the censorious croaking of frogs were side diversions. We have traversed it in the heat of summer and have lingered in its cool recesses, shut out from the heat and glimmer of the sun by a dense overhanging foliage of bramble and vine. We have traversed its shrunken waters in the stillness of autumn, in the glory of Indian Summer, of brown October, amid the rustle of falling leaves, and found it even then full of grace and beauty, although in the somber mantle of decay and death.

Like all other streams on the south side of Long Island,



it had its origin in archaic times in the glacial hills which skirt the northern edge of the Island. From this starting point it has greatly receded. Within the memory of man, however, its source was a small pond occupying a deep hollow in the bed of the ancient glacial stream in the middle of the great plains. At the period referred to it was fed, or supplied, from springs and was empty during extremely dry seasons, while now it is filled only in extremely wet ones.

From this point the infant stream pursued a southwesterly course in a depression worn by the ancient glacial current, until it reached a point about one mile east from the Village of Hempstead; thence its course was almost, or directly, south, with but little crookedness, through a dense and heavily timbered forest, about two miles to Turtle Hook, where it crossed the Merrick Turnpike, and about one mile further south it crossed the swamp road leading from the Main South Road at Coe's Neck to Hempstead. The stream here was of surpassing beauty, about sixty feet wide, the current swift and over a clean, pebbly bottom, and at ordinary times not over five inches deep; thousands of trout crossed these shallows daily. Still pursuing its course southerly, skirting moderately high ground on the west, and through a continuous swamp of heavy timber, noted for the great beauty and variety of its flora and fauna, its forest odors and bird notes, for there is scarcely a bird known to the ornithology of upland birds of the State of New York representatives of which could not be found in these woods,—about three miles to the Milburn pond, the stream sometimes flowing between banks scarcely five feet apart and at others over a bed fifty feet wide.

It was an ideal trout brook, one upon which poets might dwell with enthusiasm and word-play:

“I chatter over stoney ways,  
“In little sharps and trebles,  
“I bubble into eddying bays,  
“And babble on the pebbles.”

—*Tennyson.*

At the end of the last named three miles it flowed into an artificial lake or pond created in the early history of the town for the purpose of making a power for a grist mill located at Milburn, then called "The Corners." The grant for this pond was to John Pine.

To this point the stream was a continuous spawning bed for trout and the pond itself, full of cold springs, was a prolific breeding place.

Flowing through this lake nearly a mile, the waters of the stream escape at the south end over a waste gate into the creek below. This pond or lake in our boyhood days was the temporary abode of great quantities of web-footed game. We distinctly call to mind many varieties of ducks, and particularly the hell diver (grebe), the latter of which we have cause to remember with much mortification for the many abortive efforts to slay them with an old-fashioned firearm. They were too nimble for a flint-lock.

The grebe is destructive to the young trout, as is also the duck, and the kingfisher destroys thousands; probably not more than three per cent. of the trout hatched naturally escape all the varied enemies encountered and attain maturity.

Mr. Dunbar, an old man who lived in the woods near the head of this pond, told us that there were two gigantic pepperidge trees in the swamp not far from his home in early times, on which eagles built their nests for many successive years, and that they fed their young entirely from the brook, taking as many as twenty trout a day to their young. We wonderfully suspect that Mr. Dunbar's eagles were simply fish hawks, which, like the eagle, is a noble bird, and belongs to the Falconidæ. This bird was from twenty inches to two feet in length with a vast spread of wing, reaching when fully extended over five feet. Pliny called it the "Sea Eagle."

The fish hawk is strongly built and is of great flight, has powerful talons for seizing and holding its prey, upon which it depends entirely for food. It flies slowly over the water at a height of from ten to twenty yards; when it sees a fish it

drops itself down and seizes its game in its talons. No naturalist or fisherman ever understood how the fish hawk managed to get a living fishing with its limited appliances, nor could he were it not for the absolute stupidity of its game. He cannot swim, cannot dive, and he cannot take his game in his bill; he is only calculated to take fish from just such shallows as those described in our stream. Still he does sometimes take them in open waters.

The pose of the fish hawk when sitting is dignified and haughty, and all its movements are graceful. It is migratory and arrives in our latitude in the early part of March, and leaves for its more northern home and breeding place about the first of May. This bird was much sought after by the Indians; its quills and tail feathers were used by them to plume their arrows and to ornament their calumet and adorn their garments.

A few rods north from the head of the pond, near the residence of Mr. Dunbar, and on the west of the stream, nearly opposite the residence of Samuel Miller, on the Hick's Neck road to Hempstead, in the middle of this swamp, there was within our recollection (1840) a piece of cleared upland of about two acres. It at one period had divided the stream, when it (the stream) was much larger. From its novel situation and surroundings and traditions it was a fascinating spot to us. We visited it frequently and were enamored of its natural beauty and solitude. It was surrounded by a wild and almost impenetrable tangle of swamp on three sides; on the other was the stream. The ground still bore evidence of former cultivation. This island, for such it was, was detached completely from the mainland by a dangerous morass on the west, the former bed of the stream. In this morass Thorne Bedell, a simple fellow, an old resident who lived within two hundred yards of the spot, became entangled one dark night and perished. This was late in the 30's.

Tradition says that in early times this island was owned and occupied by two Indian families who lived by cultivating

the ground, trapping game, gathering nuts and berries and following the bay. They were regarded as industrious and respectable. During this period a feud existed between the Indians of this vicinity and the Rockaway and Canarsie tribes. Out of revenge for some real or imaginary outrage committed upon the Rockaways or Canarsies by the Merikos, a company of the former stealthily gained access to the island in the night, murdered the two families of Indians, men, women and children, and burned their houses. This was regarded as a most wanton and diabolical outrage, and the whites of the neighborhood took up the matter with a determination of punishing the perpetrators, and for that purpose organized a small party of volunteers, armed themselves and marched to Rockaway and Canarsie to arrest the culprits, but failed to find them, the tribes denying all participation in the crime. The volunteers, disclaiming Indian methods of visiting vengeance upon the whole tribe, returned without accomplishing anything, but the outrage rankled in the bosoms of the people for a long time, and Rockaway and Canarsie Indians were afraid to enter the territory of the Merikos unless in sufficient numbers to defend themselves in case of an attack. An account of this tragedy was current in the neighborhood when we were a boy, but we are unable to give even an approximate date of the massacre, except the date of the Governor's permit, allowing pay to those who might volunteer to go against the Indians.\*

At the time of our familiarity with the island the ground was pretty generally covered with dwarf huckleberry shrubs (Soponaria), but there was extant evidence of former cultivation, and the location of houses and remains of caches, the

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\*From liber A, page 114 of the town records of the Town of Hempstead we copy the following:

The 3d of Oc't 1659.

Upon a message sent by ye Governor by Capt. Newton & Leut'nt Steelwell it was granted that all Vollentiers that were desirous to goe under pay ag'st ye Indians mighte have their liberty to goe out of this place.

Teste

JOHN JAMES.

[s. s.]



Indian method of preserving their potatoes and other vegetables during the winter. And the great number of shells about the ground was an evidence that the occupants lived largely upon molluscs from the bay.

The pond or lake heretofore referred to was about one thousand feet wide and flooded a portion of the original Tredwell estate.† After passing the waste gate on our way to the ocean the stream and surroundings assumed an entirely different character. The swamp and forest disappear, and its course was then through meadow and marsh land beset with reeds, mallow, calamus and cat-tails (typha), about two miles as the crow flies to the Hempstead Bay, but instead of being

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†From *The South Side Observer*. 1885.

A NOTABLE LAWSUIT.

The Court of Appeals has just decided a case of much interest to this vicinity. As nearly as can be ascertained we give the history of the case.

In the year 1683 one John Tredwell was the owner of a large tract of land lying at and about Milburn in this town. It contained about 2,000 acres a part of which still remains in the Tredwell family to this day. Through this property runs a stream of water which has caused the litigation. In 1686 the people of the township granted to one John Pine the privilege of selecting a stream of water for the purposes of erecting a grist mill to do the town's grinding with restrictions not to select a stream where there was a mill located or about to be erected. He was also granted five acres to set his mill upon. If he failed to secure a stream within one year the grant became void.

Pine selected the stream at Milburn and built a dam, with the assistance of John Tredwell on the Tredwell property which caused the formation of a large pond. This grant has passed from one to another until some thirty years ago it passed into the hands of Carman Smith. Mr. Smith then obtained some sort of a deed of pond and pondage, and assumed control although his claim was disputed by the Tredwells and the matter has lain dormant for years. About four years ago Christopher Risley came to Milburn to reside at the Tredwell homestead. After examining titles he decided that the Tredwells owned the dam and the pondage around and all the privileges. He secured from the Tredwells permission to go fishing on the pond. A war of words ensued. Mr. Smith sued Mr. Risley for trespass in Justice court. Risley raised the question of title and carried the case to the Supreme Court. Judge Gilbert decided in favor of Smith. Risley appealed to the General Term which reversed Judge Gilbert's decision. The opinion written by Judge Barnard was that the Tredwells owned the pond and pondage and all privileges and that Smith must be governed by the original grant to Pine to do the town grinding only.

Mr. Smith then carried the case to the Court of Appeals which again decided against him confirming Judge Barnard's opinion at General Term. Thus ended a tedious litigation by Mr. Smith losing all interest in the property which he has held and controlled so long.

The pond has been taken by the City of Brooklyn for the purpose of supplying the city with water. All other questions are to be settled between the Tredwells and the City of Brooklyn.

straight as the stream above the pond, its waters flow at least three and a half miles to accomplish this two miles. This creek was called Tredwell Creek in the early town records.

From the plain edge to the pond this stream flowed through a continuous forest of heavy timber. But a new and important factor is encountered here; the stream now becomes subject to the force of the ebb and flow of the ocean, about four miles distant, into which it flows.

Reverting again to the millpond or lake above mentioned, created by the construction of a causeway or dam at its southerly end, the structure being at right angles to the stream and extending from high ground at either extremity of the dam. The dam was about twelve feet wide at the top, with a well-graded walk for people on foot, and was in early times a popular promenade.

When a boy, in the fall of about 1835, on a Saturday night after dark, my mother required some things from the store kept by James Frost at the Corners (Milburn). We had a man, a farmhand called Jack. He was mentally sluggish, but was physically a perfect man. We were sent to the store to do the shopping and Jack was to accompany us for protection, it being after dark and we were afraid to go alone. Frost's store was just on the west side of the pond, and we were obliged to cross the dam. The dam was a dark, dismal place at night, being studded with willow trees which entirely overhung the pathway. After purchasing the goods and on our way home Jack took into his head, as soon as we entered upon the dam, the notion to run away from us, thinking it would be funny, and he started at full speed, just at a point where the dam was the highest and sloped on the south side thirty feet or more to level ground. Jack struck a tree while at full speed. The blow knocked him down and stunned him, and he lost his hat. We felt about in the sand for the hat, but could not find it, and we went home without it. Jack's bruises were rubbed with liniment and he sent to bed.

Now it happened that on this same evening old Sam

Gritman, an itinerant shoemaker, who had been at our house at work all the week making up our winter supply of shoes, had received his pay from my father for the week's work, which did not exceed four or five dollars, left for home after we (Jack and I) had left for the store. He had also to cross the dam on his way home.

On the next morning, it being Sunday, Gritman came to our house in a shattered nervous condition with the sad story of having been waylaid by robbers on his way home on the dam on Saturday night. They knocked him down and he rolled over the bank, which probably saved his life, for he escaped them. There were two of them. He heard them talk and they felt around in the sand for him for some time, but he lay still and they did not find him. In coming over Sunday morning to tell of his miraculous escape, he stopped to inspect the place where the assault was made, and then he found the hat of one of the would-be assassins, and produced it. It was Jack's hat, and it told the whole story of the tree and thieves.

Jack, instead of running into a tree as was supposed, ran into old Gritman and bruised him badly, but not seriously.

To resume: English ichthyologists tell us there are no trout in this country; the fish we call brook trout is no trout at all, but simply the charr. We are satisfied with their nomenclature so long as they are pleased with it, but we have no disposition to re-baptize our radiant beauty known to us only as brook trout, *salvelinus fontinalis*, with the meaningless and emotionless name of charr; the name is not euphonious with the character of the fish.

They say that the classification is based on anatomical differences of structure and talk glibly of dorsal, pectoral, ventral and caudal fins, dual dontiforms, microscopic scales, pylonic appendages, etc., but they give away their whole case and prove too much when they show that age changes and modifies all these distinctions, and that species are extremely unstable and variable, and their conclusions consequently worthless.

The hero of the four-pound trout above named was an expert fisherman, with a large experience, and he had studied with marvelous success the habits of the creek trout (which is only an intensified brook trout) and knew every hole in the creek where they frequented, where they fed, on what they fed and when they fed, and their sporting ground after feeding.

The creek trout is a refractory creature and when in one of his moods no amount of flirtation can woo him from his dogged humor; it must wear off.

He is a voracious feeder, but very nervous, and will not feed when the least affrighted.

*Saturday, July 7, 1840.*

Vacation this year will be spent at home. Have prepared myself with reading matter, principally Natural History. I anticipate great pleasure from *Elements of Conchology*, by E. I. Barrow, A.M., Dick's *Sideral Heavens*, etc.

The Fourth of July was uneventful. Went to White Hill to see boat race between Dr. Richard Udal's yacht of Babylon and Tom Raynor's sloop. They sailed from White Hill to Fire Island Inlet. Raynor was the winner.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE FAMILY PICNIC.—THE BROOM FACTORY.—MR. TERRY'S INVENTION.—TESTIMONIAL TO CAPTAIN RAYNOR ROCK SMITH.—THE FAMOUS HORSE RACE.

*Monday, July 20, 1840.*



AVE just returned from our annual family picnic to the beach, a custom observed by our family for many years and many generations. As usual, had a delightful day and some happy reunions. Uncle Oliver Ellsworth with his family from New York accompanied us, and with whom the novel excursion was a great treat, some of whom will regret their indiscretion in going about with arms, feet and necks exposed to the burning sun. Have had a charming day; everybody happy, tired and sunburned.

*Saturday, August 15, 1840.*

Uncle Daniel Smith, father and myself sailed from Bedell's Landing on August tenth in the sloop "Ploughboy" for the west end of Coney Island, the occasion being to witness experiments to be made with the new Tredwell cannon, in which my father and uncle felt some interest.

On the voyage we passed within hailing distance of the great Rockaway Pavilion at Far Rockaway Beach, one of the largest summer hotels in the country. The main building is 230 feet front, with wings of 75 feet each, the piazza is 235 feet long and 20 feet wide.

After eleven hours' sailing with light winds, we rounded Coney Island Point and anchored in Gravesend Bay near Coney Island. The bay was filled with all kinds of craft.

We had never been so far from home before by water. We took but little interest in the cannon and consequently spent our time in roaming over the island. There were many people who came with teams, following the edge of the surf on the strand, and some came on foot from the east end of Coney Island, but more came in boats.

The beach was very interesting to us, the scenery of which was novel and unsurpassed in beauty. The cannon was tested on the point of the beach, the shooting directed toward the ocean. We did not see the experiments with the gun, but believe they were eminently satisfactory to the government officials under whose supervision the experiments were conducted. My father and uncle were pleased with the result.

Daniel Tredwell, the inventor of this great cannon, was

born at Ipswich, Massachusetts, in 1791. In 1819 he invented and put in operation the first power press ever constructed in the United States. It went into general use. In 1826 a turn-out for railroads. In 1829 devised a machine for spinning hemp, adopted over the world. In 1835 a patent process for making cannon, which was later adopted by Sir William Armstrong and known as the Armstrong Gun. He founded and edited the *Boston Journal of Philosophy and Arts*, from 1834 to 1845 was Rumford Professor of Technology in Harvard College. Invented a cannon of great calibre. He was author of many works and of many inventions. He died at Cambridge in 1872.

*Wednesday, October 24, 1840.*

Went to the sheep parting yesterday. It was remarkably similar to that of last year described in this journal—in short, like all other previous years. The same omnifarious multitude with similar purposes, if not identically the same, the same grade of gamblers and toughs.

There was a decided improvement in the representatives of the horse sporting crowd, and the racing on the Jericho Turnpike road was considered more attractive.

There was a new and higher grade of politicians present. The selling of the plains and marshes were dead local issues, the present were national. In November next there is to be elected the ninth President of the United States. The candidates were long ago selected, Martin Van Buren and William Henry Harrison, and the campaign up to the present has been a vigorous and bitter one. The respective merits and demerits of the two aspirants were ably and eloquently set forth from their party platforms yesterday.

We have on a former occasion referred to the absence of all accommodation at the sheep parting, nor was any expected. There were, however, a limited number of reserved seats, consisting of the top rails of the fence surrounding the sheep pens. Nothing on earth probably as a resting place has less adaptiveness to ease and comfort than a rail fence, and yet two out of every three countrymen, as a rostrum from which to air their brains, select the fence. We have seen two of these baronets of the soil engaged in a cow trade mounted on the sharp edge of a chestnut rail when there were a dozen more comfortable and lowly seats in sight. This habit is a survival of arborescent man.

In our itineraries around the grounds we espied a neighbor of ours, James Wood, a respectable boss fisherman of Hick's Neck and a very entertaining man. He always commanded an audience, and he was always telling stories, and here he was perched upon the top rail of a

panel of fence in his shirt sleeves (he weighed about 260 pounds avoirdupois), and holding forth to an admiring audience of Goths and Vandals, to whom he was relating a story of a miraculous draught of moss-bunkers.

In the pen immediately behind Mr. Wood were four or five sheep, including an old patriarch ram. From the time we entered upon the scene our earliest glance at that old ram convinced us from his pose that he was meditating mischief, *i.e.*, had unpacific intentions. The violent gyrations of Mr. Wood's arms were a defiance and a challenge to this Sultan of the Hempstead pampas. Mr. Wood's audience saw this impending *coup de grace*, and they urged him on, anticipating fun. Finally, with that peculiar ferocity and dash of the ovine family when going into business, the old ram raised himself on his hind feet and made a plunge straight for Mr. Wood's parts exposed over the fence, and with the momentum of a pile-driver planted his two horns into Mr. Wood's lumbral regions about ten inches below his gallus buttons. The blow was terrific. Mr. Wood broke from his moorings and landed ignobly in the rear part of a booth occupied by a vendor of a newly invented device for peeling and slicing potatoes and coring apples. Wood's friends crowded around him and with the strongest attestations of sympathy got him on his feet. Mr. Wood was no fool. He said nothing—he thought. As near as we could ascertain he had sustained no damage above the shock, and the loss of his suspender buttons.

*Sunday, November 8, 1840.*

Yesterday ended the brief Indian Summer of this year, only four typical days. Today ends in rain, snow and slush and getting colder.

*Friday, December 4, 1840.*

A great snowstorm now in progress, accompanied with a gale of wind.

*Sunday, December 6, 1840.*

The snowstorm was one of the severest and most destructive ever known in this part of the country, and it was of great extent; the snow is said to be one and a half feet deep in Philadelphia. It averages about one foot here, but the storm closed here with rain. It was very damaging to shipping along the coast.

A fishing crew from Hick's Neck, consisting of five men, had been caught in the storm and had not been heard from for three days. Fears were entertained for their safety, as it was known that they were not provided with provisions for a prolonged siege. As soon, however, as the weather had sufficiently cleared, the horizon was swept with a large spy glass, when a signal of distress was discovered flying over the hut at the Hummocks on Long Beach. This was either the missing crew of fishermen, or shipwrecked sailors from the main beach. Immediately provisions were made for rescue and a relief squad was organized under

the direction of the wreck master, composed of Thomas Carman, Horton Homan, Richard Soper, Thomas Dunbar, Charles Johnson and Jim Tom, to carry relief and rescue the sufferers, whoever they may be, which resulted in bringing the fishermen to mainland, the weather still being cold and boisterous.

It seems that they had lost their boat in the early stages of the storm and had no means of relief unless from the mainland. They reached the hut on Long Beach by fording the West Run at low water.

*Monday, March 1, 1841.*

Yesterday closed a long and uneventful winter. The old diary is encumbered with entries of weather conditions, daily school incidents and events of a purely personal character, none of which are of a sufficient general interest to entitle them to be transcribed in this journal. This is a bright day and there are promises of an early spring.

*Saturday, April 10, 1841.*

The broom factory on Coe's Neck is to close. During the past two years Daniel Smith, Jr., of Coe's Neck has been experimenting upon raising broom corn. He had erected an economical shop, or factory, with small machinery for turning his own sticks and making brooms on the place, and had also adopted means for placing his goods on the market of Long Island. For the latter purpose he engaged two canvassers to visit all the country stores on Long Island. They each started out with a two horse wagon load of manufactured brooms, consisting of twelve hundred brooms, great and small, which they were to sell and take orders. The enterprise up to the present time, Mr. Smith says, has been a great success, but he regrets that he must give it up in order to take charge of another part of his father's estate.

This is much to be regretted, for one reason, the success of the enterprise and its growth promised to give employment to quite a number of young people along the whole line, from planting of the corn to the completion and sale of the goods. No one has come forth prepared to make terms for the continuation of the business.

It is to be regretted for another reason. It is a good thing to have cheap brooms and plenty of them. We have heard the opinion expressed that the number of brooms used in any community furnishes the surest criterion from which to judge its moral advancement and progress, and concerning the important part which the little insignificant instrument sustains in regard to domestic comfort and neatness, the opinion may be correct. According to this standard, the inhabitants of Coe's Neck and thereabouts ought to be in the most advanced stages of moral development. But according to the Justice Court record of Squire Ben Smith, the culmination of matrimonial infelicities in broomstick assaults has increased two hundred per cent. since the factory was established—owing, as the Squire suggests, to the ever presence of this convenient weapon.



*Friday, September 10, 1841.*

For a number of years past our apples had been taken to John I. Lott's, down at Hick's Neck, to be made into cider. This year my father had concluded to take them to George Smith's at Raynortown, he having an improved press for the mash and a much larger mill, with horse-power for grinding. My father thinks we will have about four barrels for this season.

Less and less cider is being made on this part of Long Island every year. Our orchard is getting old and no efforts are being made to repair it by planting new trees. John I. Lott formerly made a great quantity of cider, but he is now very indifferent about it. He says it does not pay. Since steam transportation has been introduced it can be brought from a distance, where it is raised with less expense, and the New York market can be supplied much cheaper than he can raise it.

*Tuesday, October 5, 1841.*

Night before last, Sunday, October 3rd, was a wild night on the South Side. A storm broke upon us from the southeast and east with strong wind and moderate temperature and rain on Saturday morning, which increased in severity until Sunday night, when it became terrific from the southeast; the tide rose two feet in our brook and covered the bridge, part of which floated away. Uncle Daniel Smith's crib and wagon house were unroofed and some of the shingles were found in our garden, a number of houses and barns were blown down, chimneys demolished and trees uprooted. Our orchard was much damaged and great quantities of fruit destroyed everywhere.

Old people say this was the fiercest storm ever known on this part of the island, even more destructive than the epochal September gale of 1833. The waters of the ocean were blown three or four miles inland. The grass, the leaves from the trees and buildings are encrusted with salt, left after evaporation had carried off the water.

Much damage was done to the small craft of the south side of Long Island, but we have heard of no great disaster of sea-going vessels on the south beach, and probably there were none; the gradual growth of the storm gave warning of its approach, with ample time to escape, and again, it did not reach far out to sea.

*P. S., October—1841.*

The newspapers from the East are bringing in reports of the wonderfully destructive storm in the Eastern States; the damage to the shipping and loss of life along the coast were enormous. Vessels in port broke from their moorings and were cast on shore. In the harbor of Portland, Maine, several vessels were completely wrecked, and at Portsmouth, Cohasset, Cape Ann, Gloucester, Newburyport and Nantucket great damage was done to shipping, and to the wharfs, vast quantities of lumber were carried away and lives lost.

The greatest loss of life, however, was at Cape Cod. The beach

from Chatham to the highlands was absolutely strewn with wreckage. The effects of this disastrous storm are still being received; already the list of vessels lost numbers hundreds, and of lives lost, thousands.

No storm every known in the Eastern States was half so destructive. Long Island was marvelously favored. We have up to the present heard of no loss of life, and the wreck of only a few coasters and small craft.

In the New England reports the gale is described as coming from the north northeast, while on Long Island it was from the southeast.

*Sunday, October 10, 1841.*

Reports continue to be received by the papers showing that the above destructive storm was more widespread and more ruinous than early reports show. It was a storm long to be remembered by Long Islanders; to the New Englanders it was phenomenal.

*Tuesday, October 12, 1841.*

It is reported that this storm effected great changes at New Inlet. The channel of the inlet is said to have moved westerly several hundred feet, and that large bar of many acres has formed inside. Similar changes are constantly taking place along the south coast of Long Island, but it is seldom one storm works so great innovation as this one.

*Saturday, November 6, 1841.*

Our oldest people tell us that up to the present this has been the harshest, most inclement and blustering fall ever known, and it is losing none of its reputation today.

It began snowing this morning with a high northeast wind and it has alternately snowed and rained all day. The storm is as full of vigor as an adult snowstorm of February. This is our Indian Summer season, but for the two past years it has had a brief duration.

*Wednesday, November 10, 1841.*

Mr. Daniel Terry, a millwright, a neighbor of our family, lives at Frost's Corners and is the miller at that place. He is a very ingenious man and has been engaged many years on a most wonderful machine which is to run forever, a perpetual motion. The people in the neighborhood talk about it; nobody has ever seen it. The shop in which Mr. Terry keeps it and works upon it is in an upper story of his mill and kept always locked.

Today we were permitted to see the wonderful machine, and it is wonderful. It is elegantly made, that is, the mechanism, the finish, but we don't believe it will run, and still we think Mr. Terry ought to know what he is about.

The machine consists of an overshot water-wheel with self-adjusting buckets. The water which furnishes the power is raised by an Archimedian screw and after being run over the wheel is deposited in the reservoir below, from which the screw again raises it. The machine

is expected to run by the gravity of the falling water which the machine pumps up; the water is used over and over again. By a very ingenious device the loaded buckets go down at arm's length and on returning discharged on the other, the arms fall in close to the central shaft so that the lifting force is greatly decreased in the up-coming buckets, nearly nil. As soon as the buckets have passed the centre, on top, they drop out at arm's length again and are prepared to receive their freight, which carries them down with great force. There were six buckets going down loaded at the same time and ten empty ones coming up. Now, in order to keep the machine going there must be a constant supply of water to fill the down-going buckets. The water for this purpose was drawn up by the screw before named. The power which raised the water was furnished by the down-going buckets. Here lies the great solecism overlooked by Mr. Terry, for strip the machine of all its redundance, cancel both sides of the equation to its simplest form, and we have  $x=x+y$ , that is, to raise the water will require all the power generated by the gravity of the same water, plus  $y$ , the friction.

It is a very complicated piece of machinery, and although Mr. Terry did not charge it and set it in operation in our presence for reasons which were quite obvious, the machinery was not prepared for it; yet he explained it so clearly that we began to think it would run, but it won't. It is self-evidently impossible. We did not tell Mr. Terry so. He was very kind to permit us to see the machine when so many were anxious to get a glimpse of it. (His reason was that he thought we were a bright boy.) Many people in the neighborhood believe that Mr. Terry will some day startle the world with his great invention. But we do not. Of Mr. Terry's mill, every part, from the water-wheel to the bolting bin, was made by him, or under his immediate direction; every cog-wheel in the mill, concentric or eccentric, was made of wood. There was not an iron cog-wheel in it.

Perpetual motion, as applied here, is a machine to be moved by a power furnished within itself and not from any source outside of it, and continues without ceasing and without any renewed application of force. It is no part of the requisition concerning perpetual motion that the machinery should never get out of repair. What is looked for is not perfection in the construction of the apparatus, but an unfailing moving force.

From the day of our visit to Mr. Terry's and for a long period onwards our head was full of perpetual motion machines, and in our imagination we constructed hundreds of them with one result: the resistance to overcome and the power

to overcome it (so to speak) were always equal, and the thing stood still. But why did not the clear head of Mr. Terry see this? Because his head was not clear; he had great mental activity without sound principles to control it, and he was a better theoretical machinist than practical engineer. He was endeavoring to raise himself over the fence by the straps of his boots.

Mr. Terry reasoned that so long as the example was before him of a man raising himself by a tackle and fall without any outward application of power, just so long would he entertain hopes of eventually accomplishing a machine that would do the same thing. This is where Mr. Terry's reasoning is at fault; he has left out one important factor—caloric.

Mr. Terry, however, was not a unique dispenser of faulty logic on the subject; the victims of the fallacy of perpetual motion are multitudinous and date from an early period in the history of mechanism. The beginning of statistics of the eighteenth century is full of them. There were fewer in the nineteenth century and they are not all dead yet, many probably not so far gone but they may be saved.

From 1860 to 1869 there were eighty-six English, twenty-three French and thirteen American patents taken out for perpetual motion.

But on the whole, the pursuit of perpetual motion may have been a benefit to the world at large; many important discoveries in mechanics have been worked out just as the fallaciousness of perpetual motion was discovered. The sewing machine, the typewriter and the bicycle all carry improvements made by the perpetual motion crank. This mechanical solecism, however, has its parallels in the intellectual world, as Judicial Astrology, the Philosopher's Stone, the Quadrature of the Circle, the Multiplication of the Cube, and the Elixir of Life. These have all had, and ruined, their victims by tens of thousands. Nearly one hundred years ago the Academic Royal des Sciences at Paris passed a resolution that they would no longer entertain communications about discoveries



of perpetual motion, and the reasons given were at some length and may be summed up: "The thing can't be did."

One of the most novel expositions that could be offered to the public of mechanical proneness would be a collection of machines constructed for perpetual motion. It would be an exhibition of the utterest stillness, and deadest immobility, a show of labyrinthian structures to run eternally, all absolutely motionless.

Mr. Terry was not only not alone in his mental hallucinations, millions of dollars have been expended in the hopeless experiment of perpetual motion. Thousands of the acutest minds the world has ever produced have logically demonstrated the feasibility of all this. Yet, as a product of human ingenuity not even the remotest approximation to success has been experimentally accomplished, for while it may be logically true, it is experimentally false. We may reason about it, speculate objectively and subjectively about it, for imaginary things are as capable of being represented in thought as real ones. And we may also predicate of it from certain premise that when once put in motion it will continue forever. And notwithstanding all this, the moment we apply the empirical method, or what is actually known about it, it declines to ratify our abstractions in refusing to go after exhausting the force which first set it in motion.

I have examined hundreds of these elegant specimens of mechanism, ingenious contrivances, every one of which is a mechanical syllogism with a defective major premise. And hundreds of men who fancied they had made great physical discoveries have come to their senses by discovering that they have committed great mechanical blunders.

Mr. Terry was the projector of many very important improvements in mill machinery. He was always at work on something new. As early as 1839 he had a boat about fourteen feet long in the mill pond to which he had attached a novel motor power. On the outside of the boat he had rigged a screw (Archimedian screw) about five feet long and attached

to each side of the boat under water. The screw was constructed of an iron rod or tube about five feet long and a strip of sheet iron about five inches wide, twisted spirally around it, making a screw. This iron rod communicated with machinery on the inside of the boat by an endless chain. The whole was set in motion by a crank. We think this was a great success, but we do not remember of ever having heard more about it. The boat moved with ease and with great rapidity, and was a great curiosity in the pond for a long time, and unless there is more to be learned adversely upon this question, we think Mr. Terry should be accredited with having discovered and first applied successfully the screw for the propulsion of boats, or vessels. Captain John Ericssen made a successful application of the screw in 1844-1847 to the "Rattler," a vessel built in the United States. But I believe Mr. Terry was the real discoverer of the screw propeller.

Up to 1855 the screw had not been adopted for men-of-war. The French were constructing two or three experimental vessels. Great interest was excited on this subject both here and in Europe. The ablest naval constructors and engineers had determined that it would be impossible to obtain more than ten knots an hour as an extreme figure, under which circumstances the propeller would be of very problematical utility. And the "Austerlitz," then being equipped as a propeller at Rochefort, it was hoped would be enabled to compass four or five knots an hour under steam.

The history of the manifold improvements and development of the screw as a propeller is not within our province, but it has undoubtedly revolutionized the entire method in maritime science, with the limit not yet reached, nor the ultimate in view.

*Monday, January 10, 1842.*

We called upon Raynor Rock Smith of Raynortown to have him verify to us some straggling facts which our memory imperfectly re-

tained concerning a testimonial presented to him by the citizens of New York on an occasion, the facts of which are as follows:

On January 2, 1837, the barque "Mexico," 300 tons burden, came ashore at Long Beach. She had on board one hundred and twelve passengers and a crew of eighteen, all of whom perished in the wreck save eight. No relation of the details of that sad, sad story will be recounted here; they are matters of history. Our purpose is the preservation of a subsequent event bearing upon, or a sequence to, the great calamity, which event reflected with much credit and honor upon a neighbor, the most modest and unassuming man that ever lived. The unparalleled heroism displayed by Raynor Rock in his efforts to save the lives of the unfortunate passengers and crew of the barque "Mexico" at the risk of his own life. He, commanding one of the bravest crews that ever manned a surf boat, will be immortalized in the history and records of the great disasters of the Long Island coast.

No shipwreck and suffering that ever happened on the south shores of Long Island has made such a deep and lasting impression upon the sympathies of the native population of Hempstead South as did this disaster to the passengers and crew of the "Mexico." The sorrow was sincere and universal.

We remember the event of the wreck of the "Mexico" and "Bristol" with great distinctness. We remember seeing the bodies of the drowned and frozen brought from the beach in sleds and placed in rows in John Lott's barn for the identification of friends and relatives. We remember the funeral, consisting of fifty-two farm wagons carrying the boxes containing the bodies of the unclaimed dead. It was a sad sight.

Everybody here knows Raynor Rock Smith and all are familiar with the many brave and noble acts in the service of humanity accredited to him. But in his superhuman efforts on behalf of the passengers and crew of the ill-fated "Mexico" his fame reached beyond his immediate neighborhood; his efforts affected the state and the nation. Citizens of New York City saw this, and hence this public recognition.

On the 25th of March, 1837, less than three months after the "Mexico" calamity and less than two months after the entombment of the victims at Rockville Centre, a committee of gentlemen from the City of New York, composed of William J. Hawes, Joseph Meeks, John Horspool, Lawrence Ackerman, William Kellogg and Benjamin Ringold, met Raynor Rock and his friends by appointment at the hotel of Oliver Conklin in Hempstead for the purpose of presenting him, Raynor Rock, with a token of regard (a silver tankard) in commemoration of his services to humanity.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the committee from New York arrived, and the presentation took place in the hall of the hotel in presence of a large audience of New Yorkers, South Siders and many villagers.

While awaiting the arrival of the committee and at the personal

request of a friend of Captain Nathan Holdridge and the audience, Mr. Smith recounted in detail the rescue of Captain Holdridge from death. The story was intensely interesting, rehearsing minutely all that transpired for over half an hour while he struggled alternately in a tempestuous surf for his own life and in keeping the unconscious captain from drowning, and finally getting him on the beach and in working all night to revive him. It was a plain, simple story of self-devotion to an unfortunate human being, told without adornment, flowing with the enthusiasm and eloquence of nature. This was long prior to the wreck of the "Mexico."

On the arrival of the committee the meeting was called to order and organized by the appointment of John Simonson to the chair. The object of the call was read, when William J. Hawes delivered the following address in presenting the cup:

"Mr. Chairman, Citizens of Hempstead," and turning to Raynor Smith, said:

"We are a committee appointed by the citizens of the Fifth Ward of the City of New York to discharge the difficult task of expressing to you their admiration of your chivalrous attempt to rescue the passengers and crew of the barque 'Mexico,' lately stranded on the adjacent beach, and to ask your acceptance of a trifling token of their regard for your intrepidity.

"You, sir, cannot have forgotten the terrors of that distressed wreck, nor is it possible for us not to remember how nobly you and your gallant associates adorned humanity in your life struggle with the elements, and how well you redeemed our coast from the ignominy of inhospitality.

"Having awaited in vain for the recognition of your services in a more general and distinguished manner, we have felt that we owe it to our city, to the credit of our state and country, so far as in our power lies, to express to you the sentiments we entertain of your perilous adventure. We cannot forget the morning of that eventful day, when the weary 'Mexico,' with an insufficient and mutinous crew, doomed to avoidable destruction, poured out her signal gun of distress among the breakers of Long Island; when mothers and sisters and rough sailors stretched imploring hands to the shore and screamed unavailing prayers to Him who rules the storm; when, as if to turn into mockery the attempt to save the predestined ship, violence was given to the winds and fury to the waves, and builded between the vessel and the shore a wall of floating ice, which scarce even hope itself could struggle to surmount.

"Who that saw the scene—the lingering death of a hundred martyrs to cold and hunger and hope disappointed, freezing in the sight of comfortable hearths, starving in the view of abundance, despairing in the midst of promise! I cannot attempt to paint a description of that day and night of horror! It was amid the terrors of such a



"scene, when the boldest and skilfullest stood upon the beach in doubt  
"and dismay and awe, that in risking everything but honor and the  
"plaudits of the humane, your sole adventurous skiff struggled through  
"the resisting ice and climbed the overwhelming mountains of surf, and  
"sought to bring salvation to the perishing wretches, who ought to have  
"expected you rather as a fellow sufferer than a saviour. What heaven  
"denied to their prayers it seemed willing to grant to your courage.  
"Eight souls live to pray for the future reward of your exertions. The  
"rest cold death claimed for his portion.

"The city knows the fact, the commercial and Christian world  
"knows the fact, and the press the length and breadth of the country  
"have heralded your heroism and hazardous endeavors. We propose  
"a simple but more tangible and lasting testimonial that you and your  
"children may contemplate with pride. Such conduct has in other  
"countries gained for less daring heroes the reward of civic crowns and  
"national honors. He who saved the life of a Roman was honored with  
"a seat next to the Senate, and public assemblies, when he entered, rose  
"to do him reverence. These rewards we cannot give you. But such  
"as your fellow countrymen can give, of gratitude to one who has ren-  
"dered honor to the state, such we bestow. These we yield, these we  
"bring in tribute, that your children and the children of your brave  
"boys may not complain that Americans cannot appreciate acts of de-  
"votion and danger, and that your distant posterity may have preserved  
"among them a glorious example of their ancestor. We have caused a  
"skilful artist to engrave upon silver a faint sketch of your achievement.  
"Upon this cup, which I now tender to your acceptance, is embossed the  
"story of the ill-fated 'Mexico' and the glory of Raynor Rock Smith.  
"It is but a sketch, for the labors of the artist, however successful, can  
"initiate only the prominent features of the scene. . . . In tender-  
"ing to you, sir, this token of our regard, we do not expect greatly to  
"add to your honor, nor to increase the esteem in which you must be  
"held by every man who appreciates virtuous heroism. It is perhaps  
"more as a relief to our own hearts than as a sufficient tribute to your  
"merits that we bring our offering. Justice to ourselves requires us,  
"nevertheless, to say it is not a mere impulse, not an emotion springing  
"from the first impression produced by the performance of a good ac-  
"tion, that has prompted this expression of our feelings. The memorial  
"has been considered. The worthiness of your conduct has been  
"weighed. It is from deliberate justice, as well as from glowing ad-  
"miration, that our tribute springs. . . .

"Permit me now, in conclusion, to express the gratification which  
"I personally feel in being the organ of expression of the sentiments  
"of our constituents. None can know better than I know how well the  
"tribute is bestowed. I have had the enjoyment of your acquaintance  
"for many years and have witnessed more than one instance of your  
"skill and courage. I have partaken of your hospitality in the islands of

"the sea and have had good occasion to commend the staunchness of your surf boat. But there lives another worthy citizen who will commend more than I know how to do the intrepidity which is the theme of our present praise. Years since, at the imminent peril of your own life, you rescued Captain Nathan Holdridge from the surf and recalled him from the jaws of death back to grateful life. For him and for all the other lives you have saved to the republic, we thank you. And we pray that your valuable life may long be spared, if not to act in future cases of distress, to teach and encourage your sons and grandsons how to earn esteem on earth and a worthy welcome into heaven."

To which Mr. Smith replied:

"GENTLEMEN:

"I thank you, I sincerely thank you for your gift. In return for it I can only say that should a similar wreck, or any other wreck, ever again occur on our shores, I shall endeavor to show that I deserve it. I shall preserve your gift. I shall value it above all price. It shall remain with me while I live, and when I die it shall not go out of my family, if I can help it."

A simple entertainment was then had prepared by the friends of Mr. Smith, in which only about thirty participated. This highly commendable act of private citizens in recognition of the humane and heroic act of Raynor Rock Smith had a salutary effect upon the community and led to the incorporation of the "Life Saving Benevolent Association." This society has been of incalculable service in life saving on the south shores of Long Island, not that it has increased the number of those heroic and humane people who have always been ready to hazard their own lives to relieve distress, but that such acts were through this Association given to the public. One noted case of many is that of Patrick T. Gould, who received a gold medal from that Association for courage and humanity in saving the lives of the crew of the brig "Flying Cloud," wrecked at East Hampton, Long Island.

We must forego the pleasure of recording many notable instances of life saving which, besides courage, displayed a vast knowledge of how to act in the face of a heavy surf on the Long Island coast.

*Tuesday, May 10, 1842.*

Having a leave of absence today, we attended the great contest between "Fashion" and "Boston," two horses reared under methods respectively Northern and Southern.

It was never our fortune to see so many people gathered on any one occasion as were massed at the Union Race Course, Long Island, today. This great event was the outcome of a challenge from Colonel William R. Johnson, a Southern man, a Nestor of the sporting world of America, to James Long, of Washington, to run his mare, "Fashion," four-mile heats, best two in three, against the latter's horse, "Boston," for

forty thousand dollars, twenty thousand a side, to be run on the Union Course, Long Island.

The number of spectators who witnessed this great trial of speed was estimated at between fifty and sixty thousand, gathered from all parts of the United States.

The day was all that could be desired, and the track in good condition. All efforts to describe the enthusiasm of the partisans in this great contest would be absolutely useless.

The race was won by Johnson's mare, "Fashion." Time, first heat, 7 minutes, 31½ seconds; second heat, 7 minutes, 45 seconds.

This was the second great race between the North and South, a former having taken place in 1823.

There had been much contention between Northern and Southern breeders in bringing up and training blooded horses for best results. These sectional experts differed on many points, and hence this great meeting.

The amount of money which changed owners on this day at the Union Track and other places consequent upon this contest must have been enormous. It ran probably up into hundreds of thousands. It was also a harvest for the land-sharks; some of the most enterprising of the light-fingered professionals may retire on the earnings of this day. They operated in gangs and on lines entirely circumventing the efforts of the constabulary of Queens County.

*Thursday, May 12, 1842.*

The people of the Town of Hempstead have been greatly exercised over a proposed canal, extending from deep water on the Hempstead Bay to Milburn. The subject has been much discussed and the Government has made preliminary surveys from the head of Long Creek to the Milburn corners. An enterprise of this character would vastly improve the commerce of the town and build up an important business center at Milburn.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CROWS.—THE MILLERITE CAMP-MEETING.

Sunday, May 15, 1842.



E are taking these notes from the open door of the second story of the wagon-house, while watching the movements of a flock of crows. About one hundred and fifty yards from the house a crow is perched upon the summit of a locust tree, on the highest dry branch. His pose is majestic. His companions, seven in number, are upon the ground. That this one crow is placed there as a sentinel to give warning of approaching danger there can be no reasonable doubt. A man crossing an adjoining field four hundred yards away was deemed suspicious and the "ka-ka" comes from the top of the locust. In an instant the crows are on the wing; they settle in a near woods, and in a few moments the danger seemed to have passed, they return and the sentinel again takes his station, and the crows resume their meal.

That sentinel crow has watched us scrutinizingly as we have him, and taken as copious notes, but so long as we remain up in the wagon-house he will not become suspicious of us.

The movement of these crows is an interesting study, and we watched them until they had gleaned their breakfast on the stubble and cornfield and flew away. Nothing gathered from this interview would go to change our long established conviction that the crow is a criminal, and he knows it. Man is his enemy, and he knows it. A crow don't loaf around a cornfield with a picket guard for fun, nor for exercise. The vacant corn hills when the young sprouts begin to appear attest to his thrift, but he is wily; he takes a minimum number of chances, and those are when his wit fails. He does not know the significance of a piece of bright tin fluttering from the end of a pole in a cornfield, and he gives it a wide berth. He has familiarized himself with the straw effigy of a man set up in a cornfield. He knows the difference between the stick the man holds and a real gun, and he commits his depredations under the very shadow of it. The man image is a physical fraud and he has demonstrated it, but the fluttering tin is metaphysical; his logic will not explain it; therefore he avoids it.

The crow is a philosopher and a logician. The depth of his philosophy or the soundness of his logic we need not here go into; it is sufficient to preserve to him a whole skin. He is a sound reasoner so far as applicable to his personal safety. If you betray *the least interest in him* he construes it into intended mischief. He will sometimes permit you to approach near him, providing you appear indifferent to him, but



the moment you *betray the least interest* in him he becomes suspicious and seeks safety in flight.

*Tuesday, June 7, 1842.*

The apology for retaining the following in the journal is that some of the events connect the famous criminal with Hempstead:

Colonel Monroe Edwards, otherwise I. P. Caldwell, under which title he operated, was brought to trial in the City of New York before presiding Judge William Kent, Aldermen Hall and Hatfield, for forgery and other frauds. His operations involved an amount exceeding \$160,000.

Monroe Edwards had formerly been a prominent figure during the summer season in the Village of Hempstead, and was highly respected there for his social and charitable qualities. He entertained a great affection for sport in the South Bay; hence the great interest taken in the trial by Hempstead people who knew him personally. Many attended through the entire trial, which lasted eight days.

We attended with my Uncle Oliver Ellsworth, who was attracted there by the great men engaged in the case, and he believed that Edwards was the subject of a conspiracy.

The fraud committed by Edwards consisted in forging checks and commercial paper, in which he displayed a consummate knowledge and adroitness, far transcending that of the ordinary criminal, embracing a labyrinthian field of false and forged correspondence.

In social life Edwards was a man of extraordinary attractiveness, of faultless personal address, and all who knew him personally believed in his innocence to the last.

A great amount of legal talent was arrayed on this trial. For the prosecution were James R. Whitney, District Attorney, assisted by Hon. Ogden Hoffman, and for the defense Hon. J. J. Crittenden, U. S. Senator, Hon. Thomas F. Marshall, I. Prescott Hall, Robert M. Emmett, William M. Price and William M. Evarts. Up to this period of our history, in the following respects—the amount involved—the high status of the court—the legal talent on both the prosecution and the defense, and the social standing of the defendant—this was the most extraordinary criminal trial ever had, or probably ever will be had in this state; such a combination is not likely to ever occur again in any single trial.

Those who witnessed the trial have pronounced it one of the most consummate exhibitions of legal sparring ever known, and the eloquence of the summing up will never be forgotten by those present.

The trial occupied eight days. The appeals to the jury were masterpieces of the highest order. Edwards, however, was found guilty, convicted, and died in State prison. There was a pamphlet published of this trial, which (trial) was re-

markable for the dignified manner in which a desperate case was handled.

Mrs. Chapman Coleman, daughter of John J. Crittenden, in her life of her father says: "In 1868, I was in Washington and was introduced to Mr. Evarts, then Attorney-General of the United States. I was introduced as the daughter of John J. Crittenden, and I received from Mr. Evarts a cordial grasp of the hand and a touching allusion to my father's public character and private worth. I told him that I was collecting materials for the life of Mr. Crittenden and asked his assistance. This he readily promised. Mr. Evarts at that time told me this anecdote:

" 'At the very outset of my professional career, I was associated with Mr. Crittenden as counsel in the famous trial of Monroe Edwards for forgery. (Monroe Edwards was a Kentuckian. His parents lived in Logan County, where he was born and where Mr. Crittenden commenced the practice of law. Mr. Edwards' family were among Mr. Crittenden's most intimate friends, and Monroe had been, in boyhood, one of his special favorites. Mr. Crittenden came forward to exert his best abilities in the service of his old friend.)

" 'Mrs. Coleman,' said Mr. Evarts, 'I shall never forget that trial in connection with your father. I was a young man on the threshold of my professional career, and your father's reputation was firmly and widely established as a lawyer and a statesman. His cordial manner during the trial is most gratefully remembered by me, and at its close he asked me to take a walk with him. During that walk he took a slight review of the trial, complimented me upon my course during its progress and the ability he was pleased to think I had manifested, and in conclusion, grasping my hand with warmth, he said: "Allow me to congratulate and encourage you on the course of life you have adopted. I assure you that the highest honors of the profession are within your grasp, and with perseverance you may expect to attain them." Those words from Mr. Crittenden would have gratified the pride of

any young lawyer and given him new strength for the struggle of his profession. I can truly say that these words have been of the greatest value to me through life.' "

*Sunday, July 10, 1842.*

Today is the ninth consecutive day in which we have had rain. We don't remember so long a spell of rainy weather; our enduring storms are usually from the south, but during the last nine days we have had but little southerly wind. Reports from the northern and western parts of the state bring accounts of similar weather. Vast quantities of hay have been ruined, having been cut and no weather to cure it and get it in. A famine for our stock is prophesied therefore next winter.

*Tuesday, July 26, 1842.*

Went yesterday on our annual family picnic to Long Beach. We were conveyed from the landing in the small boats of Daniel Smith, Samuel Tredwell and Daniel Tredwell to the head of Long Creek, where we embarked on a large sloop belonging to Daniel Smith. The company consisted of the families of Thomas Tredwell, John Tredwell, Daniel Tredwell, Samuel Tredwell, Benjamin Tredwell, Daniel Smith and Lester Bedell, consisting of fifty-one persons, representing three generations. We sailed down Long Creek to the beach, where we arrived at 9.30 o'clock and moored the sloop in deep water close to the bank, where we could walk to the shore on a gangplank. We roamed over the beach, bathed in the surf and swam in the still water. Some of our party gathered clams for a clambake. Everybody was enjoying himself generally. Dinner, which had been provided by each family, was served in common on the deck of the sloop under shelter of the mainsail spread over the deck as an awning. The dinner was the great feature of the day. All kinds of good things had been prepared and everybody had a good appetite. Cheer after cheer went up as dish after dish of chicken salad and pan after pan of baked beans were brought upon the table.

After dinner we took another stroll on the beach and at six o'clock got under way for home with the early flood. The sail home was delightful, and we ventured outside New Inlet until we felt the ocean ground swell; when some of the women complained of sea sickness, we returned.

The wind was light; the weather perfect. Our progress homeward was slow and tedious; we did not arrive until after dark. The small boats were dispensed with on our return; it being now high tide, the sloop came up to the dock of Samuel Tredwell's landing, where wagons were in waiting to carry us home. Everybody had a good time, got sunburned, and the old folks and the children were very tired. Thus

ended a very pleasurable day, a kind of family reunion, which will be repeated again next year, as it has been continued from immemorial time.

*Sunday, August 14, 1842.*

Went this day to see the great Millerite encampment in Pettit's woods, about one mile south from the Village of Hempstead. We believe they have been encamped here about one week. This piece of primeval woods is charmingly adapted and is held for purposes of this kind. The grounds are fenced, or stockaded, and can be closed at night against intruders. The encampment does not in any essential particular differ in its arrangement from an ordinary Methodist camp meeting. There is a large shelter, or stand, erected, from which sermons are preached or addresses delivered.

There are seats erected sufficient to accommodate two thousand people; besides, there is a large tent capable of holding a great many people, to be used in the emergency of bad weather. The private tents, of which there were a great many, were arranged about the grounds much as the ordinary camp meeting. We were told that the attendance during the week had not been remarkably great, being mostly composed of the faithful; people were too busy getting in their crops to listen to talks about the end of the world. "We'll get our wheat in, and then we don't care."

But there was a vast number of people on the ground today, the greater portion of whom were attracted there out of curiosity and the novelty of the occasion. Not much respect was shown for the promoters of the Millerite bubble. It was regarded by all level-headed people the most airy of all the religious frauds.

The founder of this schism was William Miller. His doctrine was made known to the world in 1833. He claimed that he had discovered from the Scriptures that the second coming of Christ was to take place in April, 1843, when the world would come to an end and the faithful would enter at once into the joys of heaven; that they would be translated in the flesh when the dissolution took place, which Miller prophesied would be in April, 1843. This doctrine of Miller, which seems to supplement the general belief of all Christians in the second coming of Christ, did not require a great deal of pushing to capture the minds of weak Christians. Many of the strong ones ridiculed Miller as a fraud, while in their hearts they quaked with fear as the day approached, fearing that it might be true.

While the great crowd on the camp ground who were not worshippers, nor neophytes, maintained a marvelous decorum, it was quite the reverse on the outside of the grounds; for a fourth of a mile north and south of the main entrance every conceivable traffic in bibulous fluids was carried on, and noisy vagabond crowds occupied booths on the highway. There was a constant stream of pedestrians going and coming from the Village of Hempstead.



The most attractive speaker during the day was Joshua V. Hines, chief saint and prophet. He spoke twice during the day from the outside stand. One Amasa Baker held forth from within the big tent. He was a fire eater. He enunciated emphatically that all the saints who accepted the teachings of the prophet and were prepared would enter with Christ the Kingdom in April next; all others would be burned to a cinder by an avenging God. Many others preached, but the principal method for proselytizing was through the circulation of printed matter, pamphlets, not only for the camp ground, as was being done at the present time, but for years previous the country had been flooded with Millerite literature, pamphlets and books. No household on the South Side escaped this infliction. Some of the pamphlets were made up of labyrinthian diagrams, signs, with a muddle of mathematics, chronology and Scripture references, entirely beyond the comprehension of any sane man. By this means the doctrinal jungle had been thoroughly introduced to all grades of society in this part of the town, and with all this and a great deal of intemperate bluster, and the promise of a free passage to heaven, while all other things were in a state of fusion, many people who had never seriously anticipated going to heaven at all were scared into a yearning, and some no doubt were led to sincerely believe.

But we shall see what takes place on April next. Many of the faithful have made complete arrangements for the ascension, some having already prepared ascension robes of elaborate structure. Some, it is said, have given away their property to relieve themselves of all earthly attachments, knowing that they will have no further use for such things.

The devotion of these deluded people to their cause and their absolute faith transcends anything we have ever seen in the way of religious enthusiasm. In all their prayer meetings, in their singing and in their conversations, there was an earnestness marvelous for so weak a cause. There were many people about the grounds known to us whose interest seemed to be more than mere idle spectators. They appeared to be connected with the encampment; many of them belonged on the Neck, and whom we had never suspected of being tainted with this most preposterous fake, they being communicants in other churches.

Altogether, the day was profitably spent in meeting friends and punning about becoming colors for robes, etc., not, however, in a sense of ridicule to those sincere worshippers; upon their leaders rests the odium.

The records of the Millerite movement in the Town of Hempstead during the years from 1834 to 1843 would form an important factor in the history of the town during that decade. Many proselytes were made in Hempstead from the

sturdy, hard-working yeomanry of the South Side, who had successfully resisted the appeals of all other sects.

They were reached principally by personal contact, the newspapers and a vast amount of book and pamphlet literature.

William Miller, the founder of the sect, was born at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1781, and he began prophesying the end of the world and the second coming of Christ about 1834. The Great High Priest, however, of the sect was Joshua V. Hines.

The following is from "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian of the City of New York (1816 to 1840)": "This year (1833) saw the beginning of the Millerite craze, which assumed considerable proportions during the ten years or more next succeeding, causing a good deal of talk and newspaper comment and unsettling many weak minds. William Miller of Hampton, New York (born in Pittsfield, Mass.), believed, or pretended that he had discovered from his study of the Holy Scriptures, that the end of the world was near at hand and prophesied Christ's second coming in the month of April, 1843. The new doctrine was promulgated by preaching and circulation of books and tracts and secured adherents, many of whom when the appointed time drew near divested themselves of their property, as being of no further use to them and prepared ascension robes to be in readiness for the great day. Finally, the day arrived; full of expectation, every Millerite was prepared; but on that day, nothing unusual occurring, it was said that some error in the computation had been found and that the true date was in October of the same year. All this did not in the least degree ruffle the faith of the true believer."

A letter in the "Troy Times" of July, 1894, contains an account by the Rev. Professor Wentworth, then in the Troy Conference Academy, of a visit made by him to Miller on the day before the great expected conflagration.

Professor Wentworth says: "That although the final judgment was so near, and the faithful were casting away their

worldly goods in contempt of all things perishable, it was not so with Miller himself. He believed," says Dr. Wentworth, "in the Scripture injunction, 'Occupy till I come,' and his fields were clean mown and cropped, his woodhouse was full of wood sawed and piled for winter use. Forty rods of new stone wall had been built that fall, and a drag stood ready with boulders as a cargo to be laid upon the wall the next day."

Lydia Maria Childs' caustic comment on the Millerite was that she had "heard of very few instances of stolen goods restored, or of falsehoods acknowledged as a preparation for the dreaded event."

Upon the failure of the second prophecy reasons for a new one were forthcoming, and again on March 22, 1844, the Millerites, clad in their ascension robes, gathered on hilltops, looking vainly for the coming of Christ from the East. It was a pathetic company and much of the pathetic quality attended this delusion, in the course of which the more feeble minds became deranged, and not a few committed suicide.

During the years embraced in this recital much discussion was had among the people of a higher intellectual grade than Miller's proselytes generally, upon whom little or no impression was made by these ranting adventists.

Miller outlived his reputation as a prophet, but not that of a sacreligious fraud, and the end of the world came for him in December, 1849. The Second Adventist Sect, however, of which he was the real father, survives as his monument, having attained the dignity of further sectism and subdivision within itself, some of the members having developed new views of the Trinity, while some retain orthodox opinions, some taking up the seventh day notion, others Sunday, etc. Miller, of course, was the figurehead, but the brains were in the head of Joshua V. Hines, an early convert, who became the real organizer of the movement and provided and disseminated its literature. In after years, when sect after sect appeared among the remaining adherents of Miller, Mr. Hines continued to be the leader of the more conservative. At the age of seventy-

four so adroit a schemer was he that he received Deacon's orders in the Episcopal Church at the hand of Bishop Clarkson, and remained in the missionary charge then entrusted to him, and active therein, until his death at ninety years toward the close of 1895.

The same author says: 'It is a remarkable fact that the Millerite movement largely helped to pave the way for the Episcopal Church reformation, into which thousands came after the time had passed for the second coming. Millerism made no converts originally from the Episcopal Church, but drew from the religious bodies in which the doctrines of the intermediate state, the Resurrection and the second coming of Christ had been once a prevailing faith, now much ignored.'

We do not believe that the above, as a result, will apply to the Hempstead South congregations of Millerism. Our experience, which, true, was limited, was that those who drew from the churches to swell the ranks of the Millerites returned generally to their old churches, the Presbyterian and Methodist. An organization known as Second Adventists survived the collapse at Hempstead. The true believer, however, lost no faith by the first failure, but on the second and third many began to gain consciousness and realize that they had been imposed upon and felt the deepest mortification, which was much heightened by the ridicule heaped upon them by their unbelieving neighbors. And the taint stuck to them many years.

Quite a large congregation of these deluded people assembled in a barn between Rockville Centre and Hempstead (further particulars leading to identification we forbear out of respect to the many respectable survivors of these misguided people), arrayed in ascension robes on the night before the coming of Christ and their ascension. They spent the night (their last on earth) in praying and singing, and not until the dawn of day did it dawn upon these misguided idiots of the ridiculous spectacle they made in returning to their homes in their most absurd trousseau. Some felt the disgrace keenly,



abandoned the faith and from that time never in any manner referred to the subject of Millerism, or the second coming of Christ. Some remained in the barn all day and left under the shadow of darkness. These facts are all well known in the neighborhood and there are those still living who remember the incident and, in fact, there are some yet living who participated in this madman's act. Similar acts of imbecility took place in many other places. It seems improbable that a rational being could be led into such ridiculous beliefs, and yet it is no more absurd than some things in all the creeds; what makes it ridiculous is that they believed it.

*Friday, September 2, 1842.*

John Tredwell, of Brooklyn, called on my father yesterday at the home of the latter. He was in a most fantastic turnout, consisting of a jaunty buggy with bright red wheels. His team, a white and a sorrel, which he drove tandem, had exceedingly attractive harness and trappings, trimmed with ribbons and rosettes.

Mr. Tredwell and his dashing rig created a sensation among the plain country people, none to his reputation as a man of good sense, from their point of view.

He had driven from Jamaica by way of Hempstead during the morning. His horses were of the highest training, so my father says, and no man in the United States held in higher estimation a well-disciplined, blooded horse than did John Tredwell. He spent about half an hour at our house and drove off toward Jamaica.

The interview we afterwards learned was concerning some interest my grandfather was supposed to have had in property located at Huntington, L. I.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE CUSTOMS OF THE MARSHING SEASON.

#### FOREWORD.



LIKE the great plains, the marshes were the common lands of the Town of Hempstead. The marsh privileges were considered a great inducement to settlers.

Sheep parting and marshing were institutions peculiar to Long Island, and so far as we know were unique.

On the south shore of Long Island, between the upland and the beach, or ocean, is a tract of meadow, or marsh land, consisting of about 50,000 acres, of which about 22,000 acres lie in Queens County and about 8,300 acres in the Town of Hempstead.

From the earliest history of the town efforts have been made to divide the common lands of the Town of Hempstead, consisting of the plain lands and these marshes, pro rata among the freeholders of the town. These efforts for various reasons have failed in fruition. At a general town meeting held at Hempstead on October 14, 1723, certain freeholders of the town presented a memorial, setting forth "That whereas, "many persons, having no rights whatever in the town, have "used large tracts of the common marshes to their benefit and "to the injury of the real parties interested, or the freeholders "and inhabitants of the town. The memorialists therefore "pray the assembly that a division of said common land be "equitably made among the freeholders of said town, in proportion to their holdings at the present time, and for this "purpose pray that a commission may be appointed by this "Assembly, consisting of Colonel Hicks, James Searing, James "Jackson, William Willis, Sen. Benjamin Searing, Jun., Joshua

“Carman and Abil Smith, with full power and authority to “divide our said lands in manner and form prescribed.” (Here follows plan.) “And that the charges incurred in “effecting such division be taken from the town funds now in “the hands of Justice John Tredwell, Treasurer of the Town.” The resolution was adopted and at the same time it was ordered that the men deputed to make the division be allowed for their services six shillings per day each.

At a town meeting held nearly twenty years later the four supervisors of this commission were called upon for a report, and they asked for more time. The objection to the scheme seemed to be too much power in the commission, that the projected plan permitted them to dispose of the land as they pleased, and laying out to some persons select tracts, while others might be left to put up with what was left, or get nothing.

This tract of marsh land is perfectly level and is interspersed by creeks running in every conceivable direction, and being of every conceivable degree of crookedness, width and depth. A large portion of this tract of meadow produces a salt grass very healthful for cattle and sheep. And it being common land of the town, any townsman may harvest as much as he pleases, with only the restriction as to the time for the commencement of cutting. At the town meeting, or spring election, it was resolved by the good people of the town *viva voce* that the cutting of the marshes shall commence on a named day, usually Tuesday after the second Monday in September. Consequently, on the day previous, or the second Monday in September, the inhabitants go in their boats to locate a patent, or in other words, to select a desirable piece of grass not yet selected by any other person; but no one is permitted to cut until sunrise on Tuesday, under the penalty of the law. The cutting of hay on these marshes commenced early in the history of the English settlers, but the first act appearing on the records of the town regulating the cutting was on July 5, 1667, and was as follows:

“July ye 5, 1667.

“It is ordered this day by the constable and overseers of  
“this present towne that Noe man shall mow under any pre-  
“tense soever Any of ye common meddows Att the South be-  
“fore ye 25th Day of this present Month upon ye Breach of  
“this order he that shall make ye Breach of ye foresayd order  
“shall forfitt the sayd grass or hay or ten shillings a lode ye  
“one halfe to him that Complains and ye other halfe to ye  
“towne.”

From this time on, many acts were passed at the town meeting regulating the cutting of grass and many other matters concerning the marshes, until nearly one hundred years later, we find the following fully defined enactment on the town records:

“Att a Publick Town Meeting held in Hempstead the  
“thirty-first Day of August one thousand and Seven hundred  
“and Sixty-one persuant to the Direction of the above War-  
“rant it Was then Voted and Agreed upon by the Majority of  
“the Freeholders & Tennants in Common of the Said Town-  
“ship then Assembled that No Grass Nor Sedge Shall be cut  
“On the Common Meadows or Marshes on the South Side of  
“Sd Township at any time hereafter untill the first day of  
“September (Except Such Small Quantitys as people usually  
“Cut in the Summer Season to Salt their cattle), and it is Also  
“Voted by a Majority of the said Freeholders & Tennants in  
“Common that if Any person shall Cut any Grasse or Sedge  
“as aforesaid before the first day of September they shall  
“forfitt & pay twenty shillings for Every offence to the use of  
“the poor of the said Township & the following persons to  
“wit: Timothy Beadle, Sam R. Smith, Samuel Langdon, In-  
“crease Pettit & William Langdon, or any two of them are by  
“Vote of the said Freeholders and tennants in common chosen  
“to Sue for the Said Fines and forfeitures & When Received to  
“pay it to the Church Warden for the use above said.

“And whereas many persons have of late years been  
“obliged to go to the Marshes to Git hay to Winter there Cat-



“tle but find Great Difficulty in Curing the Same for want of  
“More publick Landing places and have complained at the  
“Town Meeting that Sundry persons have inclosed part of the  
“Common Land and Meadow AT South for their own particu-  
“lar use So as to Debar the Town in general the benefitt  
“thereof therefore the Freeholders & Tennants as abovesaid  
“Do by Majority of Votes Appoint and Impower Timothy  
“Beadle, Thomas Rushmore, Isaac Denton & Benjamin  
“Cheesman to Inspect into the Same and Where they Shall find  
“Any person or persons that have fenced in Any of the An-  
“cient Comanages as aforesaid they shall require Such Persons  
“to throw out the Same in Som Convenient time, Which if  
“they neglect or Refuse to Do then the said Persons or  
“Either of them Shall Lay Open the Same and the Town to  
“Clear them Harmless for So Doing & as Several persons  
“Who usually practice Gitting Hay of the Marshes have  
“Made Application to this Town Meeting in behalf of them-  
“selves and Others that Now Do or hereafter May have Occa-  
“sion to Git Hay of the Marshes for Libery to Inclose such  
“parts of the comonages as they May have Occasion for to  
“cure their Hay On. During the General Season of Gitting  
“Sedge and then their Inclosure to be removed So as to Lye  
“in common.”

All of which was granted by the Major Vote of the Freeholders.

On June 17, 1765, the above enactment was confirmed by the assembled freeholders, adding “That whereas, many persons have for Several Years past in order to Ingross to themselves the Sedge Growing on the Most handy Marshes in the Said Township as Soon as the time Comes for Mowing to go on with such a Number of hands as to Cut down Such Large parcels as cannot be got off under several days which Not only Renders it Liable to be Carried away with the tide & so make a Scarcity butt is doing great Injustice to the other Inhabitants having a right as they are deprived of a

"Share in the handy marshes and are obliged to get most of  
"their Hay from the Most distant.

"Now, if any persons Shall for the futer any time before  
"the 20th day of September Cut Down Any More Sedge on  
"the said South Marshes than they shall Bring off the same  
"day they Shall forfeit twenty Shillings for each Offence.

"In case of stress of weather or accident such persons  
"May not be considered offenders." A committee was ap-  
pointed to enforce the enactment.

At every town meeting some enactment was passed regu-  
lating the cutting of grass on the marshes. The last act con-  
tained in the extant records of the Town of Hempstead was  
passed August 7, 1775. It was merely confirmatory of former  
acts.

There is an unwritten common law among these honest  
people that the person first locating on a tract of marsh sig-  
nified by setting up a rake, a pitchfork, a grindstone, or other  
device, has undisputed right to occupy against all subsequent  
comers. This right is never questioned.

My father had located a cluster of islands on Shell Creek,  
better known as Mud Hole Hassock. These patents were  
about three and a half miles from our landing place on the  
mainland. The landing place was private, belonging to our  
family, and we consequently escaped the ill consequences of  
common dockage and common curing ground. Such was the  
scarcity and so great the demand for curing ground that the  
highway commissioners were petitioned to set aside a piece  
of public ground for that purpose, which they did as a free  
spreading ground.

(See Rec. of the Towns of North and South Hempstead,  
Liber E, page 70.)

The grass when cut was brought in boats (large farmers  
had scows which would carry ten ordinary boat loads) to the  
mainland, usually the same day that it was cut, for a storm  
or a spring tide might carry it all away. Here it was spread  
out on upland to cure, and when cured it was removed to the

barnyard and stacked, the cattle and sheep generally having access to it during the winter. They did not, however, eat much of it; it was very salt. They enjoyed a little of it as a relish only. Milch cows were kept away from it, as it was said to dry up their milk.

This sedge hay harvest, or marshing, as it was called, was a season of hard work, but not without its pleasures. It was extremely healthful work. There were some who cut this hay to sell, and we believe it was sold at a profit. Farmers living out of the town who kept a large stock of cattle were generally the customers who purchased it. A two-horse load after it was cured would fetch about twelve or fifteen dollars. Some of the larger farmers who wintered a great deal of stock cut large quantities of this hay and had many men in their employ during the sedge harvest. Such usually constructed temporary huts or shelters of considerable dimensions on the marsh during this season. In these rude structures they slept, generally taking their meals in the open air, one of their number usually doing the cooking and preparing the meals. The cook was generally the greatest crank in the gang. He had a weakness for his profession and was always ventilating his peerless qualities as a caterer.

Eels, hard and soft shell clams, crabs and fish being obtainable in great quantities in the waters of the immediate creeks and bays, the farmers and their hands lived pretty generally upon these products, sometimes, however, indulging in the luxury of such game as snipe and duck. There was a great variety of game birds frequenting the waters and marshes of this part of Long Island, as the plover, canvasback duck, yellow leg snipe, marlin and others of the tribe, teal or brant.

Many of the plain countrymen are genuine sporting men of the old school, famous for coolness, unassuming and who do not in the fullness of experience claim entire immunity from nervousness in extreme cases, as a prolonged struggle with a twelve-pound sheepshead with a six-ounce rod and an ordinary trout line, and whose nerves do sometimes threaten *anæsthesia*

in looking into a flock of yellow leg snipe or marlin along the barrels of his fowling piece, but they never miss their game.

We recall with great pleasure the incidents of the nine days spent in the marshing camp, during which period we slept on the marsh, ate eel and clam chowder and smothered flounders, or fluke, with the mess.

The methods of cooking were probably healthful, but not calculated to inspire the greatest enthusiasm for its classical neatness, or immaculate cleanliness, nor its conformity with the revised code of *Brillat Savarin*.

Our *chef de cuisine* was phenomenal in science and artifice; one iron pot rendered service for boiling, stewing, roasting and for a variety of other purposes. The plates used were of pewter, spoons of the same material. Elegance and formality were not distinguishing characteristics of these camp meals, but they were served and eaten with an abundance of that appetizing sauce called in the old adage "hunger." Ovid observed that even the fingers could be used with grace at meals.

The vividness and detail with which our memory recalls, after a lapse of nearly fifty years, the small incidents of the old institution and its customs, all now passed into the realm of dreams, is an evidence of the deep impression made upon us and the intensity with which we enjoyed them. We believe many farmers looked forward with pleasure to the marshing season, as a relief to the monotony of their lives. They made a picnic of it.

All is now passed and oblivion is fast closing over even the memory of these interesting local institutions.

The following entry was made:

*Monday, September 5, 1842.*

The law now in force concerning the cutting of sedge on the marshes, or the common lands, is that no grass shall be cut before Tuesday after the first Monday in September. Some amendments were made to the marshing law almost every year, but this regulating the cutting was of many years' standing.

According to a long-established custom, our gang were on the



ground at Mud Hole Hassock early on Monday (this) morning and took possession of these hassocks under a ceremony very much like that under which Hendrick Hudson took possession of the Island of Manhattan, not, however, by the erection of our flag, but by the more significant symbols of putting up a rake in one place, a pair of cock-poles in another, our residence and grindstone in another, thus giving notice to the world that our claim was by prior discovery and would be defended against all or any subsequent claimant.

As no sedge could be cut on Monday, except for erecting huts, or some such necessary purpose, the day was spent in preparation, grinding scythes, mending rakes, etc. First, a hut or shelter was erected, and all hands were set to work in its construction. The site selected was on Shell Creek and which had been occupied for the past twenty-five years for the like purpose. There is no high ground on these marshes, but our home site was a trifle higher than the surrounding marsh, made so to some extent by the accumulations incident to occupancy. The soil, and consequently the vegetation, had changed in immediate proximity to our habitation. The vegetation was in a transition state and was already beginning to give evidence of upland tendencies, and a resemblance to fresh water products. All this greatly relieved the monotonous landscape.

A hardy shrub with strong woody fibre had taken possession of a little knoll around our hut and extended its sheltering branches over the less hardy aliens which from accident or selection had invaded our little plot. It is marvelous how soon after being rendered possible by leeching and bleaching that upland plants appear in favored spots on these marshes to the exclusion of all saline types.

Our household consisted of five men and myself and accommodations, although necessarily the most primitive, must be provided for their protection from storms and for comfortable sleeping quarters. In fine weather we would be expected to take our meals in the open air. One of our gang took charge of the preparation of meals and the cooking, and the quantities of food consumed by these five men was truly astounding, although a large portion of our food was prepared on the mainland, such as bread, navy hard bread, pies, cooked ham, baked beans and many others; vegetables were cooked in camp; also clams, fish, eels and birds were served daily. We had an abundant supply of fruit and melons.

Everything now being in readiness for the opening of the season tomorrow, Tuesday, supper was served, and after smoking their pipes the men turned in and in a few minutes were sleeping as soundly as played-out children.

The novelty of the situation drove sleep from us, and after seeking in vain to sleep, thinking into forgetfulness, we crept silently out into the open air. It was a magnificent night. The moon and stars were reflected in flickering zig-zag lines upon the rippling waters. A

slight mist like a curtain hung motionless over the distant creeks, but the solitude was painful. Now and then we were startled by the metallic cackle of a meadow hen or the muffled quack of a sheldrake. Otherwise it was the silence of death, save the ceaseless roll of the ocean.

*Tuesday, September 6, 1842.*

The men were on hand at sunrise with a determination to send a freight of grass on shore on the morning flood tide, it being high water a little after ten o'clock, but alas, on the first stroke with the scythe it was evident that we must suspend in consequence of the snails, the *Melampus-bidentatus*. These little creatures, not more than a quarter of an inch long were on the grass in countless millions and absolutely prevented the men mowing. They have a tough hard shell and in one stroke of the scythe its edge must necessarily come in contact with thousands—no scythe could endure it. This initial trouble was a little mollusc, an air-breathing animal with true lungs, whose habitat was in the mud at the roots of the sedge grass. He is emphatically a saline creature, but he is wonderfully fond of a little fresh water, and in the morning when the dew is on he ascends the stalk to get the pearly drop suspended on the tip of the sedge leaf, and in such vast numbers are these tiny creatures and so simultaneous are their movements that they would defeat any effort of the mower to cut through them.

Operations must therefore be suspended awaiting their pleasure; from this there was no appeal. However, they soon completed their pilgrimage, for having captured the coveted crystal drop, they descend to their mud homes and in half an hour the grass was entirely free of them. The mowers then went at the work with a will, and in less than two hours had cut sufficient grass for a freight and had commenced loading our transport with the hay, and at nine and a half o'clock our first freight was afloat on its way to the landing.

*Wednesday, September 7, 1842.*

At nine o'clock this morning our transport was again freighted and on its way to the mainland, it being our intention to send two freights today, one on the morning flood and another on the afternoon. After the return of our boat she was again freighted and sent to the landing, this being the second freight today.

*Thursday, September 8, 1842.*

It was very foggy this morning and our boat returned late, but was immediately freighted and sent on shore. In this manner the time passed, shipping one load a day, oftener two, except Sunday.

On Sunday, September 11th, we made an excursion to the Long Beach.

Long Beach is about eight miles long, a continuous exchange of sand dunes and ocean strand. And we have heard people say that this stretch of seaboard was a bleak, dreary and unattractive waste. To this we beg to demur. It must be admitted, however, that the first

impression of the landscape is barrenness, which instead of being dissipated, is probably intensified by the sparse vegetation of coarse star-grass with here and there a sunny patch of wild flower in yellow and red. The star-grass, "Marrum" or sea mat, the roots of which penetrated to a depth of thirty feet in search of moisture, is a great protection to the dunes and to a great extent preserves the form and durability of the hills.

In some localities on our sea coast where the sand is invading the upland, the artificial cultivation of marrum has stayed the invasion and large tracts of valuable land have been saved.

We differ from those who see no beauty in the beach landscape. As a whole, the strand, the dunes and the associated marsh to us is a landscape of unparalleled attractiveness. There is something restful and soothing in its silence and stillness. No sound save that of the monotonous old ocean upon the shingled beach in front of the sand hills, and the ceaseless cry of the sea gull performing its graceful evolutions overhead, now and then a snipe; but notwithstanding all this, the aggregate effect is solitude.

The eye cannot penetrate the length of these dunes westward. They melt into the horizon and their magnitude is intensified with an endless variety of form.

These sand hills have an individuality. They are unlike any other hills. They are miniature mountain ranges, as unstable as the waves of the ocean beating at their base. They encircle deep and watered valleys, having a soil and healthful vegetation. As we stand on one of the greatest elevations facing westward, on our immediate right (the north) the white sand shades down insensibly by increased vegetation into the green landscape of the marsh with no sharp line of demarcation between beach and marsh. Next beyond to the north comes the West Run, a wide deep passage of water, like a trunk canal; it distributes all the waters of the floods and ebbs running west from and east to New Inlet. Farther still to the right, about one mile distant, by the aid of a field glass our camp is distinctly made out. Our boat that went on shore last night is just returning and will be ready for another freight tomorrow.

On the other side, the left, is the strand and the ocean, and here was a scene difficult to describe, but of unsurpassing interest. We counted within eye range from west to east sixty-four sailing vessels, sloops and schooners, coasters belonging to the various ports of the south side of Long Island, some going to, others returning from, New York and places on the Hudson. Farther out on the ocean there were within sight at the same moment eleven square-rigged ocean-going craft, some just completing their maybe long and tempestuous voyage, others outward bound.

There was a good full-sail breeze blowing from the westward and it was interesting to watch the change in position of the westward

bound coasters. It was like a vast regatta. They were obliged to beat; one tack, "the long leg," would be off shore, and "the short leg" on shore. On the on-shore tack some of them would stand close enough inshore so that we could hear the man in the jib sheets call out "let her come," or "hellum down" when in his judgment they were close enough inshore for safety, and this vast procession lasted until in the afternoon. As some passed out of sight in the distance others came in, until about five o'clock the whole coast was cleared, not a boat in sight save those entering our port. It seemed that the ocean had engulfed them, but that was not so. The weather outlook was threatening and they had prudently sought shelter in the side ports of Long Island.

We tramped several miles along the beach, feeling little or no fatigue, and on our return stopped at the Hummocks, where a large hut had been erected and was maintained; peradventure it might prove a shelter to some poor bayman, or maybe to some wrecked sailor. There was a large Indian shell heap at this place, before referred to. The hut was occupied by Ize Johnson, with general consent its accepted keeper.

Ize was a vagrant throughout. We do not mean a vicious loafer, but a dreamy idler who takes life indifferently, having learned the Art of Arts, that of doing without—a cultivated savage—this is no contradiction—it is near the perfection of manhood.

We looked in the hut, but did not enter; the atmosphere was far from being agreeable. After giving Ize all the tobacco in our party, we left for the camp.

The weather prognostications for tomorrow were bad.

*Monday, September 12, 1842.*

At six A. M. we were afloat with rod and gun to make a day for weakfish in Scow Creek, and peradventure any winged creature that may venture within our range. Weather fair, wind S. E.

Returned with fifteen pounds of weakfish and an empty gun. During the entire nine days of this picnic the weather was remarkably fine. We had but one short storm, many fogs, and among the casualties worthy of mention one was the sinking of our boat with a freight of hay on. It happened in this wise: We were getting ready to go on shore with a freight; a strong wind was blowing from the northwest and flood tide was making from the southeast. The boat was unmoored from the bank; before her crew were ready the tide swung her around against the strong wind, and between the two forces, wind and tide, acting in counter directions, she careened over, filled with water and sank. She was immediately towed to shallow water and unloaded. By this accident one trip was lost. The other casualty was the loss of a dinner through the stupidity of our cook. He upset two and a half gallons of clam chowder into the fire, putting out the fire, putting out the chowder, and seriously putting the workmen out of temper, who were obliged to satisfy their hunger upon hardtack, red herring and a short allowance of beans.



*Wednesday, September 14, 1842.*

The second marshing week was enlivened by an affair in the bay which might have ended in a tragedy.

It had been a custom from immemorial time for vessels, sloops and schooners, to lay at anchor in Long Creek with a clam basket up in the shrouds—a signal that they were there for trafficking in clams and would purchase, with cash, all that were brought to them. This was all legitimate, providing the sloops and schooners belonged to the ports of the South Side, and that those who caught and offered the clams for sale were inhabitants of the town.

A great wrong had been endured by the townspeople of Hempstead, long prior to 1753 to the present, for on the 13th of October, 1753, we find that the freeholders of the town at a town meeting at Hempstead adopted the following resolutions which embody the entire grievance:

“WHEREAS, a great many Strangers (without any Right, Liberty  
“or License so to do), and also some of the Inhabitants of the said  
“Town, have lately come with Canoes, Boats and other Vessels into  
“the Bays, Creeks and Marshes Situate on the South Side of the Said  
“Township and there Raked and Taken and wholly Destroyed Vast  
“Quantitys of Certain Shell fish Called Clams with Designe chiefly  
“for the benefit of the Shells which Havock and Wast if Continued and  
“Suffered will tend to the Total Destruction of that part of the fishery  
“in those places to the very great Loss and Detriment of the Inhabi-  
“tants of the Said Town. Especially of the poorer Sort who Daly  
“Receive great Benefit and Sustenance from the Said Fishery. In Order  
“for the Preventing of the aforesaid Mischife and Wrong it is now by  
“the freeholders of the Said Town with the Concurrence and Desire of  
“others the Inhabitants agree to and the Right Privilege and free Liberty  
“of the piscary and fishery of Clams in the aforesaid plaice is hereby  
“given and granted unto James Pine, Leffert Hogovout, Colman Comes  
“and Abram Bond as assignees and feoffers in Trust for the use and  
“benefit of the aforesaid freeholders and Inhabitants and in respect of  
“these persons who Reside in the Said Town and do do the futer for  
“their own Covetious humors Continue to Make Destruction of the  
“Said fishery in manner aforesaid the aforesaid Trustees are to agree  
“with those persons and assign them and Space where to take clams and  
“if these persons will neither Disest from Destroying the Clams in  
“manner as aforesaid or come to a Reasonable Agreement then in that  
“case the Said Assignees or Trustees are to bring them to An Appor-  
“tionment By Law or Equity as they in their Discretion shall think fit  
“and With Respect to Strangers and Idel persons who have no right  
“in the town aforesaid it is by the freeholders and Inhabitants of Sd  
“Town Ordered that for Each offence as above said they shall pay a  
“fine of Twenty Shillings and the aforementioned Trustees are Hereby  
“Impowered to Sue for the Same and to pay themselves for their Trouble

"Out of the Said fines and the Overplush Deliver to the Church War-dens for the Use of the Poor."

*Records of the Town of Hempstead,  
Liber E, Page 449.*

Re-Enacted in 1769,

And subsequently Amended.

The townspeople had suffered these outrages, from which there seemed no relief, for a long time. Legislation had been tried without avail.

Yesterday, September 13th, when the South Bay was swarming with a population of hay gatherers, a large strange schooner from New Jersey came into New Inlet, sailed up Long Creek and came to anchor opposite Skow Creek. Soon after she hoisted her basket, thus declaring her errand and soliciting trade of the native baymen. (The news immediately spread among the marshers that the strange vessel was a pirate.) This was an aggravated case, inasmuch that she came with six crews for clammimg, all fully equipped with the latest contrivances of rakes and tongs preparatory for stealing a cargo of clams, and should no resistance be offered to do so peaceable, but forceably if necessary.

On learning these facts the trustees were notified and they proceeded this morning to enforce the law. They visited the schooner, followed by a long train of baymen in their boats and a whole fleet of marshmen.

The trustees demanded that the schooner, being engaged in an unlawful traffic, immediately depart from these waters.

To this demand the captain bluntly refused to comply, declaring that he had entered the port in stress of weather for water and provisions, that he "knew his rights and would maintain them by force against a gang of land pirates if necessary." This was impolitic language, and he was instantly informed by the indignant marshers and baymen that he had an option of leaving in thirty minutes, or they would burn his vessel. He still hesitated and wished to debate his rights, but when they proceeded to carry out their threat he then hauled down his basket and was out of the inlet in an hour.

The captain of this schooner had a crew of about twenty men, which was force enough on any ordinary occasion to defy or overcome the South Side authorities with their immediately available force, or put out to sea at any moment when danger threatened. But he had made a mistake in coming into the bay during the marshing season. He had run unwittingly into a complete ambush.

The people of Hempstead had suffered too long these thieving incursions without redress to allow this one now in their power to escape without at least some healthful admonitions. No overt act had been committed, no clams had been taken by these foreigners; had there been, they would undoubtedly have been confiscated. The prompt

and determined action of the marshers turned the threatened bloody tragedy of the New Jersey captain into a one-act comedy.

*Saturday, September 17, 1842.*

Today we pulled up stakes for good. During all this marshing season the duty had been imposed upon us of supplying the camp with fish and fowl. We were complimented by the gang for our success in that department, with a chilling rejoinder from the cook, who had a contempt for our marksmanship, that he had never known game furnished at such reckless cost of materials. We did not, however, expect much from the cook, for unpacific relations had existed between us from the beginning, in consequence of our kindly suggesting the use of more soap in the kitchen economy.

The hired men, however, were not very particular in their tastes, and it was a merciful dispensation that they were not. When the Scotch hostess seized the cap from the head of one of her boys and boiled a pudding in it for Sam Johnson's dinner she made the most of her resources, and we will charitably think that our cook did his best with his limited means.

And now after all is over, so agreeably has the time passed that we do not realize that we have been away at all, but have passed through a hazy day-dream with no recognition of time. The greatest pleasures of life are probably those which come unsought, and the delicious unexpected compromise of idleness with labor was all disguised in agreeable results. The hustle and bustle immediately preceding the departure of our consignment of hay for the mainland and the delicious inactivity as we watched the product of our labor glide from its moorings and with a brisk south wind and a strong flood tide speed along Skow Creek toward its destination to add one more load to our acquisitions, was indeed a pleasurable leisure.

There are no delightful landscapes of forest and lawn embraced in these common lands to enamour the lover of bower and shade, but these marshes present a charming vista of hazy beauty unlike anything else in nature. And the creeks, the waterways, are labyrinthian and present novelties at every turn unknown to the most noted rivers of the world.

*Wednesday, October 5, 1842.*

Attended the sheep parting yesterday. The fair was much the same as formerly and as fully described in another place in these reminiscences.

There is evidently a declining interest in these doings, owing probably to the great diminution in the attendance of respectable farmers, who gave character and interest to the show, many of whom have ceased keeping sheep. For the great bulk of the people attending sheep parting did not go because they had sheep to look after, or any other real interest in its affairs. But it is very evident that there will be no sheep parting when the farmers cease keeping sheep. And this will be a con-

summation of the not very distant future. Morality is not a loser by its decadence.

In the afternoon a great storm, not in the programme, came up. It was accompanied by a furious tornado which carried away the tents, upset the booths, and the rain absolutely soaked the assembled pleasure seekers.

My father fortunately had a covered wagon on this occasion into which we retired with some invited guests, while many were glad to avail themselves of the shelter afforded by getting under the wagon, and fortunate indeed it was that our wagon had been put in our private sheep pen with its back to the northwest, whence the squall came, else it would have shared the fate of others, *i.e.*, blown away. My father, in consideration for the old horse, took him from the wagon, turned up the shafts and permitted him to stand with his nose in the wagon, thus sheltering his face from the fury of the storm. The old horse knew what it was all about and he showed his appreciation of that little mark of kindness in a manner as unmistakable as if he spoke it. After the storm was over we immediately left for home. Nobody was left on the ground except a few who had chattels there to look after and gather up, and those who were too boozy to get away. The day was otherwise uneventful.



## CHAPTER XI.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT MILBURN CORNERS.—THE TRIP TO SAG HARBOR.—SAG HARBOR JULY 26, 1843.—SOUTHAMPTON.—THE OLD SAYRE HOUSE.—MODERN SAG HARBOR.

*Saturday, October 15, 1842.*



ESTERDAY, October 14th, witnessed the great Croton Water Celebration in New York. It was the grandest spectacle ever witnessed in the city. It is said to have even excelled the famous parade had on the completion of the Erie Canal. We had a beautiful location for seeing the procession, having been invited to the store of a friend on Broadway a short distance above Chambers Street.

The procession was estimated to have been seven miles long, with a great and magnificent display, military and civic.

All trades and many industries were represented in character. One of the great novelties of the procession was a car bearing the printing press on which Benjamin Franklin had once worked, and on which were printed during its passage in the procession and distributed to the multitude, copies of an ode written for the occasion by George F. Morris, which was afterwards sung by a large choir from a stage erected in the City Hall Park.

The route of the procession was from the Battery up Broadway to Union Square, where Governor Seward viewed the troops. The procession then proceeded down the Bowery to the City Hall, and after some very interesting ceremonies was dismissed. The fountains along the route were playing during the procession.

Speeches were made by the President of the Water Board, the Governor of the State and the Mayor. The city was filled with visitors; there were never so many strangers in New York. A grand illumination took place during the evening, the City Hall was a blaze of fire and bunting, and the day ended in other public and private festivities.

*Saturday, November 19, 1842.*

Every Saturday night was market night, and there was a general gathering of the people of the Neck at the corner (now Milburn Corners).

We were greatly entertained last evening at the store of Tredwell & Frost (Milburn) in hearing some of the old veteran baymen and gunners, gathered about the store and occupying available soap

boxes and barrel heads, relate experiences of great catches, great shots and wonderful flights of water fowl.

Ad Carman and Dick Smith made their boasts that they had cut down teal flying over White Hill point of marsh before a northwest gale at fifty yards distant seven times out of ten, and Dick Verity, with sinful sarcasm, offered to put up the bullion that he would bring home more birds than both of them by taking his chances on those which they missed. There was no reconciling some of their travestied statements, nor was there any happy middle ground or average on which to repose between their extremes—not falsehoods, but sarcasms. All were agreed, however, that the old veteran, Raynor Rock, at birds on the wing in rapid flight, was the most reliable shot on Long Island. Uncle Ben Raynor was as good as the best of them in his day, and Ira Pettit, of Christian Hook, had had an enviable reputation, now far past his prime. John Bedell thought he could average up with any of them now.

All this conversation was provoked by the introduction of the fact that Thomas Carman of Hick's Neck had at some time previous killed thirty-four black ducks by one discharge of his fowling piece. This statement, as extraordinary as it may appear, was too well attested to be disputed. It created quite a sensation at the time. The Long Island newspapers and the city papers commented upon it, but some credulous people doubted it. Thomas Carman was an entirely trustworthy man and his word may be relied upon, and he vouches for its truth. We well remember the event, but cannot now give the date. The explanation, however, going with the statement being that the ducks were caught in a rift of the thin ice which was gradually closing as the two bodies of ice moved up with the flood tide, until in direct range from Carman's blind, and his shot raked the entire flock.

These baymen never use double barrelled guns, but carry two single barrels, and after discharging one into a flock, put the other in commission to take the rising birds. In this case Carman seized his other gun, but no birds arose; he had killed the whole flock, but it was found on examination that six of the birds had been drowned under the ice, where they dove after being wounded. This kind of entertainment is not of the true sporting man's hankering; it is wholesale slaughter.

The refinement and glory of a sportsman is not wanton destruction of life; genuine sporting is an inherited and humane accomplishment, and a man must be born to it as certain as he must be born a poet. A man may be taught to make a hole as wide as a barn door in a flock of ox-eye snipe and gather half a bushel of birds as a result, or reward, of his contingent luck shot, or he may wing-break a half-starved pigeon sprung from a trap fifteen or twenty yards off; but to stop a vigorous and healthy teal cutting through the keen frosty air of autumn, at daybreak, at the rate of eighty miles an hour,

or to get a bead on a frightened woodcock as he flashes through the opening of a thicket of underbrush, entitles a man to a seat among the elders. It takes an eye, a hand and a heart which science cannot create. "It is born," says Squire Bob Akeley. "Reading and writing are inflictions of the schoolmaster, but a crack shot is the work of God."

Among the shooting legends of Long Island, one was related of a Bellport sportsman slaying one hundred and six yellow leg snipe sitting on the beach by discharging both barrels into them. But Mr. Audubon, the great naturalist, once condoned such an offense. He says he was present when one hundred and twenty red breasted snipe were killed by discharging three barrels into an enormous flock of them.

Many were the marvelous feats of powder and shot related by these amphibious, tarpaulin-skinned baymen, whose sense of humor is as keen as their instincts in hunting. And their adroitness in turning the statements of another into ridicule was unique and racy, but their wit and sarcasm were shown to the best advantage in describing the presumptuous methods of a city Nimrod in taking wild fowl.

The subsistence and being of these people is with the bay. It pervades their entire lives, and when they are not engaged in gunning, or in talking and speculating upon spring flights of snipe, autumn arrivals of sea fowl, nor dissertating upon marvelous hoardes of wild pigeons, then they were either fishing or talking of fishing, at which latter they were equally expert.

It is not always a salutary subject with South Siders, but we venture the statement generally that the most successful gunner and fisher is not infrequently tainted with Algonkin blood. Hecatombs of sea fowl, willet, marlin, curlew and plover, have fallen victims to the pleasure and profit of these craftsmen.

It was the verdict of the audience at the store that ordinary duck shooting was failing; nothing short of twenty-five or thirty birds could be considered a successful day's work, and in the season, which is short, there are at least two hundred and fifty professionals hunting, and twice that number of amateurs, on the south side of Long Island alone. The birds are getting scarce, but man pursues them from Florida to Maine on their migration, during which time they are constantly under fire. Annihilation is already in sight.

We may safely say that where we have seen the South Bay alive with web-footed denizens, there is not at this time (1880) one where there were thousands. When Thomas Carman, Floyd Smith and Dick Verity would take a skiff load of coot, duck and sheldrake in a day, their great-grandsons, with all the latest and most modern equipments of destruction, would have a struggle to bag (this is a modern invention; it took the place of the wheelbarrow as a game receptacle) enough for Sunday dinner, and still growing rarer. Within the memory of men

now living, over fifty varieties of ducks frequented Long Island; now there are not half that number.

We have seen the November air thick with wild pigeons, so many that it was neither sport nor profit to shoot them. To the present generation of Hempstead South the wild pigeon is (1880) unknown, except the dressed and cooked variety. And the change was brought about chiefly by the rapacity and indiscretion of man. Of a frosty morning in the fall of 1846 we have seen the woods of John Tredwell and William Bedell swarm with wild pigeons. There were millions of them. In 1863 there were none worthy of mention, and in 1880 specimens for naturalists could with difficulty be obtained. Of birds, few existed in the State of New York in such numbers as the wild pigeon, and none have become extinct so quickly. It is now entirely a creature of the past.

*Friday, July 1, 1843.*

Events for record have not crowded themselves upon us for the past twelve months and the ordinary meteorological notes on the weather as cold, hot, fair and stormy days have become too monotonous for a popular journal.

But the ordinary has reached a climax, a turning point, and the unexpected has happened. Yesterday was an epochal day, a day from which to date a new era in electrical phenomena. It was pre-eminently a day of thunderstorms; nature had broken restraint; every spot seemed to be a storm center. The electrical disturbances began in the morning and continued at short intervals until evening, ending in a storm of painful severity.

The clearing up storm was the most remarkable we have ever known, both in fierceness and in duration. The accompanying tornado we have since been informed had a width of only a few hundred yards, but it unroofed houses and barns, blew down chimneys, trees and destroyed crops. The lightning was incessant, the sky was a blaze of fire. It struck in many places. It struck and burned Jarvis Seaman's barn and contents, with horses; it struck and killed a man and horse at the head of Coe's Neck who had sought the shelter of a large oak tree standing in the road; it struck in many other places in its course with equally serious effect, the details of which have not yet reached us. The thunder and lightning were phenomenal for half an hour. It was a continuous bombardment, and yet it was only a local storm. It came up from the west; in the meantime, as the storm approached, it was blowing a young hurricane from the southeast and hot as a sirocco. It did not seem threatening at first, but it became very dark and increased. It followed the seacoast, never extending inland more than two miles. Raynortown, Merrick, Amityville, Babylon, Islip and Patchogue all bear marks of its violence. By the time it reached Patchogue it was carrying everything before it, houses, barns, trees, fences, orchards and crops were demolished.



Patchogue and vicinity were the greatest sufferers, although the whole course of the tornado was marked with ruin. At this place it deflected and passed out to sea. It swept the Great South Bay, lashing its shallow waters into a fury, and did great damage to the small craft. We have heard of no damage at sea and there probably was none. The succession of storms and the threatening weather during the day gave timely warning to keep out of its track, which they probably did.

*Thursday, July 20, 1843.*

It now being our vacation, we were informed that some business of a family nature was to be transacted at Sag Harbor and that the option of this mission was offered to us, and it would be necessary to leave tomorrow (July 20th).

Today we were driven to Merrick, about five miles from Hempstead on the turnpike, to intercept the Sag Harbor mail stage, which leaves Brooklyn every Thursday morning at 9 A. M. At 2.30 P. M. the stage arrived at Merrick at Hewlett's Corner, opposite the residence of Doctor Wheeler. The stage was full, but room was made for us on top with the driver. From Merrick to Amityville the distance is about six miles (we get the distances from the stage driver). The road was very dusty. On reaching Amityville two passengers got out at South Side Hotel, which enabled us to get a seat inside. This was more enjoyable than the outside in the sun, and we took our book out to read, but the attractions of the country were much greater than the book. It is a singularly interesting piece of country; its contiguity to the ocean is the attractive feature. And then we had a traveling companion who took a great deal of pains to make himself ridiculous in relating his marvelous traveling experiences; he had visited many countries, and did all the talking, his hearers the thinking. During the afternoon we had a glorious shower, which laid the dust and made the traveling more agreeable. We arrived at Babylon at 6.30 P. M. Here we put up for the night at Carll's Hotel, Main Street.

Babylon (Sungum's Neck) is a thriving village, with a general air of business pervading it. The people get up early and appear to have something to do, and set themselves about to do it.

*Friday, July 21, 1843.*

We were called for an early start this morning and we left without breakfast. Our tedious and loquacious companion left us at Babylon and the last we saw of him he was disputing with a local hackman about fare to a certain place due north from Babylon, the hackman contending that the distance was fifteen miles, our traveled friend insisting with all the force of geographical facts on his side that you can't go due north, or south, from any point on Long Island fifteen miles without driving off; that's where we left him.

The rain of yesterday made the ride of this morning delightful. The distance to Islip was five miles and we had a constant view of the Great South Bay and ocean beyond, and the distance was soon gone

over. No stop was made at Islip except to water horses and leave the mail. We were soon on the road to Patchogue (Porchog), a distance from Islip of eleven miles, and nearly all the way in full sight of the ocean and an endless expanse of sand hills, going through Bayshore and Sayville, both thriving looking and well groomed little places. At Patchogue, which we reached at about 10 A. M., we took breakfast and changed horses.

Patchogue was named from a tribe of Indians who made it their headquarters. It is a lively little town of about seven hundred inhabitants with a number of hotels and some manufactories. Its greatest merit being that it is located upon the great thoroughfare from Brooklyn to Sag Harbor, and several other stage lines. It has two important business streets, Main Street and Ocean Avenue, and it has a considerable coasting traffic. Two of our company left here, and one got on. After breakfast we started for the next stopping place, Fire Place. Did not stop at Bellport, a much more important place, but a little off the road.

Fire Place, formerly Connetquot, was distant from Patchogue nine miles, where we arrived at 3 P. M. One of our passengers left here. After leaving the mails for Fire Place, St. George's Manor and Mastic, we proceeded on to Moriches. Fire Place is a small hamlet of six or eight private houses, a hotel, church and schoolhouse, the rest being mills. It is a tidy looking place nestled among willows and on the edge of a great forest, a charming place for retirement, or a recluse. Moriches is distant six miles over a territory where the leading impression is barrenness and sand. We arrived at 3 P. M., left the mail, changed horses and were off again for Quogue (also called Quaquanantuck) (the termination *ogue* in Indian proper names on Long Island means *fish*), a distance of eight miles, where we arrived at 8 P. M. and remained all night. Just before we reached Quogue we struck a strong southeast wind loaded with moisture; it set us shivering.

*Saturday, July 22, 1843.*

Had an early breakfast and were off again before sunrise, while the lighthouse at Shinnecock Point was yet flashing its rays. Our next stopping place will be Southampton, a random village built along a wide street two miles long called Main Street. It is distant nine miles from Quogue. Southampton has a reputation and a history. The travel today was slow; the road was heavy, but we had no dust. The landscape was interesting, but a desert of sand, with a few green patches to relieve it. It was a chromo landscape. A short stop only was made at Southampton and we hurried on to Bridgehampton, a distance of six miles, over which we passed without incident, except a little hamlet, ironically called a centre of civilization, through which we passed, but did not stop. We were, however, in review of the entire population of men, women and dogs. From the glances we obtained of the motely crowd should say that they were of that class of the human family

called primitive. We did not see a pair of shoes among them; they were all barefoot and nearly bareback, and appear to have solved the great philosophy of Diogenes, "getting along without things."

A short stop at Bridgehampton; we then pass tract after tract of territory marked on the school geography barren, and arrived at Sag Harbor at 4 P. M.

Sag Harbor is indebted for its name to Saggabonac (meaning the place of ground nuts), a little place near Bridgehampton, for short called Sagg, and Sag Harbor, being the seaport of Sagg, was baptized Sag Harbor.

We immediately called upon Captain Budd, to whom we were accredited. Our business was put down for the early part of the week, Captain Budd to notify other parties in the matter, the object of our visit. This was satisfactory to us, as it would give us time (nearly a week) to do up the town and possibly to visit Montauk.

Sag Harbor is not an accident; it is a considerable village, situated directly on the bay, with ample water for all maritime purposes. It has a population of about three thousand and five hundred souls, and considering that it is a seaport and its population consists largely of sailors, it is orderly. The village consists of one principal street (Main Street), pretty solidly built upon for several blocks, and on which its business is transacted, with many side streets of private residences. On Saturday, the day of our arrival, it certainly made a lively show for business. It was the market day for the country people, who came from miles around, and country wagons and "hayseeder" possessed the town.

Two whalers have arrived within the past fortnight and are lying at the wharf, and one out in the harbor ready to sail for the Pacific on Monday. The arrival or departure of one ship gives Sag Harbor an excuse for going busy, but there are three here now and the business of the town essays New York activity. The financial and commercial importance of Sag Harbor is out of all proportion to its size and population. It has a population of about thirty-five hundred, many dry goods stores, grocery stores, outfitting stores for whalers, with ship chandlery stores and others. Sag Harbor has about \$1,000,000 invested in the whaling and codfishing business, and has many packets and vessels engaged in the coasting trade. The income from its investments is about \$15,000,000 annually; the profits arising therefrom mostly remain in Sag Harbor. Last year there were twenty-five arrivals of successful whalers at the port and thirty-five departures. There were 8,000 quintals of codfish shipped from this port, the result of the codfish enterprise. Sag Harbor is the oldest port of customs in the State of New York and the oldest principality on Long Island. Henry P. Dering was appointed Port Collector by George Washington in 1790, which office he held until his death in 1832 at the age of 91.

The first known settlement within the present corporate limits of



Sag Harbor was by a small party of Narragansett Indians for fishing, about 1697. They were located at the head of the Long Wharf and the junction of what now is Main and Water Streets. The white settlers began to mix in with them in 1730. This settlement was first called Sterling Bay, subsequently changed to Sag Harbor. The country about here was at this time a wilderness, and the settlers were of a low order, engaged in the hardy industry of the sea, living in huts. The settlement increased without order or government; boat whaling was instituted here, and settlers were held together by a community of interests. It soon began to attract attention and a better class of settlers came in, built better dwellings and a church was erected and laws enacted. It became a commercial factor and in 1760 the first sea-going vessel was sent in pursuit of whales, and from 1767 to the present, 1843, Sag Harbor ranked as the second in importance of whaling ports in the United States. There are now sixty-five first class ships engaged in the industry and they have made lively pages in the history of Sag Harbor. The first newspaper printed on Long Island was at Sag Harbor by David Frothingham, called "The Long Island Herald." In 1802 Samuel Osborne published it under the title of "The Suffolk County Herald." In 1804 Alden Spooner took charge and changed its name to "The Suffolk Gazette." Mr. Spooner continued to publish the "Gazette" until 1811, when he removed to Brooklyn and commenced the publication of "The Long Island Star."

In the course of our conversations with Captain Budd during our stay he made this remark: "That a calamity was imminent with the whaling business. Whales are getting scarce, the profits are getting smaller and the expenses greater, and that he was shortening sail."

Of the inhabitants of Sag Harbor as a class little can be said. They are just what one would suppose from a population made up in the manner they were; there is no marked famous or infamous class. But there are many learned and cultured people here brought here through interest, and it was this class that gave status and character to Sag Harbor society. There are many wealthy and respectable citizens of Sag Harbor who commenced their career as ordinary seamen and rose to the rank of commanders, who are now retired capitalists, and who still maintain that the highest honors belong to those who have passed and graduated through the curriculum of a voyage around Cape Horn.

As a school for the study of ethnology and philology New Bedford is the only port in the United States that outranks Sag Harbor. Nearly every insular nation of the globe is represented in their population, and many languages spoken.

*Sunday, July 23, 1843.*

Weather very warm this morning. Took a walk from foot of Main Street up to Jefferson Street, crossed over to the cemetery and back to the hotel, the weather being too hot for an extended ramble.



In the afternoon walked up Division Avenue and Easthampton Turnpike, led on by a feeling of loneliness, the novel scenery, and the many pretty suburban residences, some palatial mansions, many of the little cottages with graceful verandas and charming green gardens, and yet in the midst of all this beauty we were sad; the truth is, we were homesick, and for the first time we began to realize it. We were a long way from home; at least twelve days intervened between us and home and friends. We walked down the turnpike towards East Hampton. Our thoughts must have been kindred to those which moved the young Ishmalite, John Howard Payne, as he stood alone in laughing Paris, in tears, whose "Home Sweet Home"



has rendered East Hampton, only three miles distant from where we now stand and where Payne was born, immortal.

*Wednesday, July 26, 1843.*

But with all the positive attractions of business, bustle and activity of Sag Harbor, we are repelled by its negative attractions. Its odoriferous atmosphere of whale oil and codfish fail to inspire us, and we seek relief now that we have closed the business which called us here.

Today we fortuitously made the acquaintance of a Southampton farmer by the name of Bishop who had, he informed us, just disposed of his load of hay and was about to return to Southampton in ballast, that is, one barrel of molasses and ten bags of shot consigned to a storekeeper at Southampton. We shipped with him for the voyage, of which we sadly repented. His old wagon was without springs and added to the clatter of the shelvings, took all the romance out of the

trip, and when we arrived at Southampton we were too lame to get out of the wagon without assistance. Mr. Bishop, however, very kindly offered to keep us at his home during our stay in Southampton, and at the same time suggested that on Saturday morning he was going to Quogue with a load of straw, and if we so desired, might accompany him to that place, remarking that the roads were heavy and while our carpet bag might have a berth on the straw, we would be obliged to walk a portion of the way. This presented no obstacles to us and we accepted thankfully.

*Thursday, July 27, 1843.*

Our purposes in coming to Southampton, which is a charming place to look upon, were twofold, first, to escape the odors of Sag Harbor; second, that our ancestors originally settled in Southampton (formerly Agawam). Southampton was originally settled by a band of fighting Puritans under the leadership of one Captain Daniel How, in 1641 (simultaneously with Southold), who came from Lynn and settled at Cow Bay ('T Schouts Baie), from which they were driven by the Dutch. July 27th and 28th were spent at Southampton in researches and enquiries concerning our family (who came from Ipswich), but reached the conclusion that when the Tredwells left Southampton or Southold they had just cause for so doing, and that they brought everything with them that belonged to them.

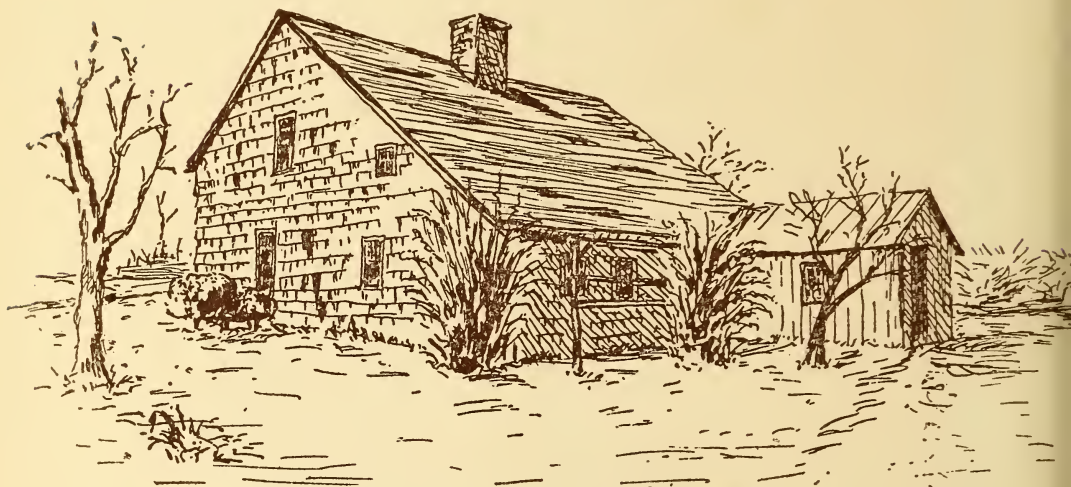
To pass our time as agreeably and profitably as possible with this clever people, we called upon a Justice of the Peace, a very old man and a cyclopedia of history, who had been in office thirty-eight years. He was a twin brother of the sexton; the aggregate of their ages was one hundred and seventy years. It may be interesting to know that the sterling virtues of these two faithful public servants were not likely to be perpetuated in their descendants, they both being bachelors.

We explored the place pretty thoroughly and were charmed with the evidences of antiquity, cleanliness and holiness which pervaded everywhere. But its out-of-door antiquity is "sickened o'er with the pale cast of modernity." New and modern structures were sandwiched in among the old and venerable remains, whose duration is measured by centuries, but the old in the main is master of the field and its antique character is dominant.

Among the many historic old residences of Southampton the most noted is the Sayre house, located at the junction of Main Street and the road leading to the North Sea and Southold. This old structure was built in 1648 by Thomas Sayre and is tenatable yet. Opposite this are the two notable old houses, one the Pelletreau house and the other known as the Johnes house. Their gables and moss-covered roofs for many succeeding years have shown but little change, save the soft and gentle hand of decay.

The Sayre house is still in the Sayre family, having passed through six generations of that family. In the line of the Sayre family was one

Stephen Sayre, born in Southampton in 1745. He was conspicuous for his personal beauty. During the American Revolution he was a pronounced Whig. He made a visit to England in 1775 as confidential agent of the government. He gained admission to the best society and married an English lady of rank, by whom he obtained a handsome fortune. He entered into financial and commercial business, which with his engaging manners caused him to be chosen High Sheriff of London. By his advocacy of the American cause and open opposition to the conduct of the Crown he was arrested under a charge of high treason and was thrown into the Tower. Mr. Sayre heard the summons with



Old Sayre House. built in 1648.

composure and obeyed its dictators with manly dignity and perfect reliance upon his innocence. He smiled at the malignity of the charge and permitted the officers to search his tables and rifle his bureau. They conducted him to Lord Rochford, where he also found Sir John Fielding. The charge in the writ was that Mr. Sayre had expressed an intention of seizing the King's person as he went to the Parliament House. The charge was not sustained and Mr. Sayre was released, and he prosecuted for a malicious persecution.

After remaining many years in London as a banker and broker, he came to America and purchased a plantation on the Delaware River at Bordentown, New Jersey, which after his death was purchased by Joseph Bonaparte, formerly King of Spain, upon which he erected a splendid mansion, which is now standing.

As we had not relished the odors of the Sag Harbor atmosphere,



so we were not in sympathy with the surviving Puritan atmosphere of Southampton, and we resolved to try Quogue.

Puritanism is a persistent and enduring type of humanity; it is full of godliness and as devoid of manliness. The old rules for training children two hundred years ago prevail today, but children rebel, and once beyond the tyranny of home and church, lose the effects of their unnatural training. With all the eulogisms upon Puritanism, it has but one quality worth perpetuity and that is its persistency, and that has two poles, a positive and a negative, one for good and the other for evil.

A resolution of the town meeting of 1653 ordered: "That if any person over fourteen years of age shall be convicted of wilful lying by the testimony of two witnesses, he shall be fined five shillings or set in the stocks for five hours."

They had laws punishing every phase of immorality, for drunkenness and gambling a fine of ten and sixpence, or three hours in the stocks. The cost of these luxuries to malefactors was to be doubled for a second indulgence, a wonderful commentary on their tendency to crime.

*Saturday, July 29, 1843.*

Had a pleasant trip to Quogue. The walk was less painful than the ride from Sag Harbor to Southampton, and did not leave the results. Have determined to remain at Quogue until the stage leaves on Tuesday. While at Quogue we stopped at the boarding house of Mr. Cooper and fortuitously made the acquaintance of Hon. George Hall, formerly Post Master and Mayor of the City of Brooklyn, who was summering here. We fraternized; there was a degree of frankness and kindness in Mr. Hall's manner that won our confidence. He has a great consideration for young people. We walked together.

P. S.—And an acquaintance was formed which lasted until Mayor Hall's death in 1868.

*Tuesday, August 1, 1843.*

We were fortunate in securing a back seat in the stage. The romance of the country failed to overcome our weariness and we at once fell asleep and did not awake until we had reached Patchogue, and then hunger awoke us. When we commenced this journey our notes were prolific in detail, but the novelty had worn off and our entries were like Mrs. Palmer's during her travels in the Malay Archipelago. Day after day she entered with painful detail in her diary her personal experiences in earthquakes, but so familiar had she become with the phenomenon that it assumed less and less importance until finally her diary closed day after day with: "Earthquakes as usual."

The stopping places on the road were reached and passed without comment or recognition until we reached Merrick, when with recklessness we offered Dr. Wheeler's farm manager six shillings to carry us to our home about two miles distant. We were joyfully received at



home. We had accomplished a great journey and everybody was glad to see us, and we were happy, having been successful in the purposes of our journey.

Since the above notes were made, now about forty years ago (1880), Sag Harbor has had her calamity and gone through all the stages of decline, from the highest prosperity down to zero; once started on the toboggan, there is no stopping place but the bottom, and Sag Harbor reached it. Not a whaling ship has entered her port in twenty years and grass grew in her streets, her immense warehouses fell into decay, her docks crumbled to ruins and her bustling streets became as silent as the Oracle of Delphi. When Sag Harbor went into decline Southampton also fell into peaceful and pious slumber and for the same cause, a decline in the whaling industry.

But, like Sag Harbor, Southampton awoke one day. Some artists became attracted to the place and modern wealth became interested in its antiquity, simplicity and healthfulness. The Long Island Railroad saw and embraced its opportunity, and Southampton is now one of the most popular summer resorts on Long Island, the Mecca of the invalid.

A new era also dawned upon Sag Harbor, but on entirely different lines of wealth and beauty. It began a new existence, became the home of luxury and culture; magnificent residences now adorn its streets and avenues; the sand hills of its suburbs have been converted into boulevards; every variety of merchandise may now be procured in its bazaars. Its harbor and bay, once filled with whaling ships, are now filled with yachts and motor boats, and altogether, there is no more charming spot for summer residence, or for the permanent home of the man of leisure and retirement than Sag Harbor.

Nothing probably since the erection of the first Indian hut within the principality of Sag Harbor has contributed more permanently in sentiment and popularity to its already well-earned reputation than the noble response of Mrs. Russell Sage from her millions to the elevation of its social and educational possibilities and physical adornment.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE PLOVER.—THE HON. SAMUEL LATHAM MITCHILL, M.D., LL.D.—THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD.—REDUCED POSTAGE RATES.

*Saturday, August 12, 1843.*



HERE is nothing remarkable in the great enthusiasm manifested by the early prospectors of this country concerning the resources of Long Island. There was probably no spot in America more prolific in animal life, or more fertile, than "This Fruitful Island near the Continent of Virginia in America named the 'Isle Plowdon or Long Isle.'"

The forests were swarming with wild life; bears, wolves, foxes and deer were plentiful even down to within the memory of man; every variety of game known to the temperate zone flourished here, from the king of wild birds, the turkey, to the tiniest of the feathered creation.

The waters were teeming with every variety of game, fish, molluscs, crustacæ, etc.; even the whale and the seal were pursued with profit. Its brooks and streams have furnished the highest standard of trout fishing in the world. Three hundred years of vandalism have wrought great changes in the fauna of the island, and still there is an abundance of game in its uplands, marshes and waters, which rigid protection is necessary to preservation. No season has ever passed within our memory without one good sporting period of eight or ten days on the Great Hempstead Plains shooting the plain plover.

Some seasons have been much better than others, but there has been a gradual yearly decline. The plover migrates north in the early spring; he is not much sought after at that time, but on his return in August he is game worthy the nobility of the sporting fraternity.

There are a great many varieties of the plover. They are insectivorous feeders. The plain plover feeds upon grasshoppers and crickets and other insects, of which they consume vast numbers and which accounts for the great excellence of their flesh. It has been pronounced by epicures as equal to that of the woodcock.

Plover shooting differs from all other forms of sporting in the world. It is a characteristic of the entire plover family (*charadrinæ*) to be desperately afraid of man on foot, but entirely indifferent about him if on horseback, or walking at the side of a horse, or in a wagon. And the sportsman who risks his chances on foot, although the plains may be covered with birds, is pretty sure to return with an empty game bag.

The plover in many respects is a wonderfully stupid bird, yet for

three hundred years his increasing knowledge of the efficacy of projectiles has kept pace with our steady improvement, and he has acquired with marvelous accuracy the range of modern shot guns. A plover feeding in the fields or on the great plains will permit a horse to approach within ten feet of him. But a man on foot, in the open, is fortunate indeed to get within a long gunshot of one in a day's pursuit.

Therefore successful hunting of the plover depends more in taking advantage of his weaknesses than in good marksmanship. Go on horseback, in a wagon, or lie in ambush, if you want success. There never has been a season within the memory of man when plover have not been fairly plentiful on the great plains, but the present is an exceptional one; in fact, they were never known to be so numerous, and great numbers have been taken not alone on the plains, but in the cultivated farm fields on the South Side, where they had better feeding and better cover.

Today, Saturday, still on vacation. We have accepted an invitation from some South Side friends to accompany them for a day's plover shooting on the great plains. We met them at the place agreed upon in the village, ourselves unequipped, however, for participating in the sport, going simply as a spectator. This was not a company of professional sportsmen, but a party of boys who were fond of shooting. The party, however, was rounded up by one professional gunner, who gunned for a living, and who knew the habits and call of every game bird on Long Island—Bob Akeley; we were under Akeley's charge.

We made our camp about halfway across the great plains northeast of Hempstead on a hollow that filled up with water in winter.

Our journey to the ground along the plain edge was enlivened by the presence of thousands of larks. We never saw so many, but they seemed to follow us always at a respectful distance, however. The larks are gathering here from the north and will not move south until October unless a cold snap comes sooner. We also passed several parties on foot, or horseback and in wagons on the same errand as ourselves, their destination being farther east.

It must be remembered that the Hempstead plains is more than a mere potato patch. It embraces sixty square miles within its limits, and as a play and feeding ground for plover fifteen or twenty square miles of private territory adjoining may be added, the latter of which for feeding and hiding is more serviceable to the plover than the former.

On reaching our camp and after rigging a blind with the long dry plain grass around a hole which had been used for the same purpose some previous season, we set out the decoys, tied our horses to stakes with about thirty feet of halter, that they might graze at their leisure, and awaited results. One of our horses was accustomed to a gun. He knew its meaning and did not flinch if discharged over his shoulders; the other was too nervous to be of service.

Two of our party were alternately to occupy the blind, the others

to remain in, or under, the wagon. The birds were apparently indifferent, for they gave us a wide berth. After a period, however, four plover had espied the decoys and came with set wing directly for them. Just as they huddled (as is their habit) before lighting, a discharge from the blind dropped all four. It was impossible for the tenants of the wagon to restrain applause and a shout went up from the wagon. In half a second the air was thick with birds; they got up from everywhere.

This was the commencement of the day's sport, which lasted about three hours, the birds coming along in bunches of from two to ten. The day's work resulted in bagging eighty-two birds. It had been a restless day for the plain plover. There were many gunners and an incessant firing was going on. Some of it was miles away, others nearer. We could see persons on horseback a mile off; others in wagons, and some lonely fellows on foot, the latter doing good execution. There were so many birds on the wing that their chances, providing the hunter could hide, were as good as those encumbered with horses.

On our way home we fell in with a party from Jamaica with trained horses. They had had a great day's sport, and had taken over a hundred birds, but had been disappointed in the efficacy of their horses, which was due to the fact that so many birds were in motion.

The plain plover is a bird of broad wing and slow pinion movements. It makes slides through the air, but gets over the ground much more rapidly than it seems with his kind of jerky movement, and the gunner who is ambitious to take him on the wing is up against a problem fit for no sloven. Many game birds on flushing are intent only on getting away and they go straight from you. That's an easy problem, but the plover has a foolish curiosity to see the cause of his alarm, and he starts up at an angle crossing your longitude; that's another proposition, and as a reward for your skill, if an amateur, you are likely to secure a few tail feathers for your pains.

The stupid plover decoys easily. He has not wit enough to distinguish between the decoy of the yellow leg snipe and one of his own species. They spy the decoy at a great distance and they come sweeping down in their rough and tumble flight all in a heap before lighting; then is the time to fire.

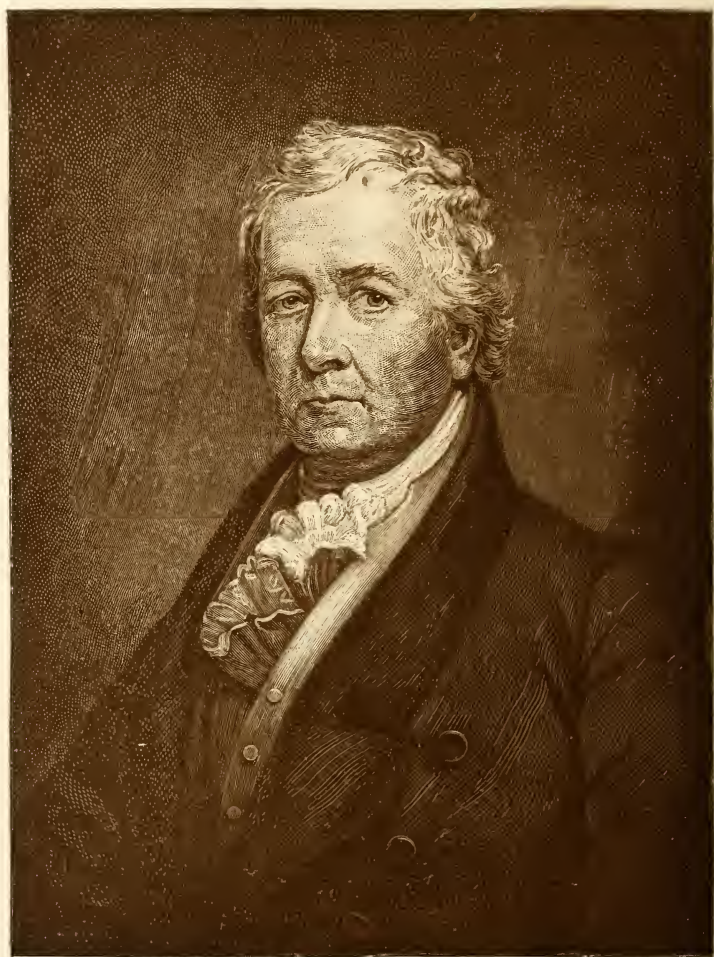
Akeley's plover call did not seem to avail much; it was very weak. Their plaintive notes are not easily imitated by the human voice, and the plover detects the counterfeit very readily. He does not use his voice much in his day flights, but at night during the migrating season we have heard them at all hours. It is a plaintive "tuckset—peetweet."

This has been a delightful day's outing. We had a mess of our birds served at Hewlett's Hotel. The whole day's sport was accomplished between the rising and the setting of the sun.

We love the country, the fields, the freedom, the air, the sunshine; this love is instinctively born within us, and does not wear out.



We turn to the open blue sky with an instinct as keen and akin to that displayed by a city-bred dog in trying to bury his bone deep in the hearthrug of his unnatural environment.



*Samuel Latham Mitchell, M.D., L.L.D.*

*Wednesday, September 20, 1843.*

My father in looking over and rearranging his old papers today in my presence, passed an occasional one over for me to read. Of the latter was an invitation to attend a dinner to be given by Hempstead farmers in honor of Samuel Latham Mitchill, M.D., LL.D., who had only a year previous retired from the professorship of agriculture in Columbia College. The dinner was to be given at Sammis' Tavern,\*



*Old Sammis Hotel.*

Hempstead, October 12, 1803. The invitation was signed "Hewlett, Rockaway."

\* The Sammis Tavern is located on the North Side of the Turnpike Road extending through Long Island, east and west, and is located in the Village of Hempstead. It was built by Nehemiah Sammis in 1680, and is probably one of the oldest, if not the oldest inn in the United States. It has consequently been standing about 200 years continuously in the Sammis family. The grandfather and father of the present owner were born on the premises. The inn was used by the British officers as their headquarters during the Revolution. The people of Hempstead were generally loyal to England and were treated by the British with great consideration. The farmers were paid for their produce in British gold. After the Revolution Washington visited this old inn and testified his satisfaction of the accommodations and hospitality of the home. This was in 1788 when Washington was on his way to New York City to attend the Federal celebration. He came across the Sound, landing at Lloyd's Neck and drove across the plains accompanied by a body guard of fifty young men of Oyster Bay.

Daniel Webster spent the night there on his way to Babylon during the campaign of 1851. His name is found on the register. Much historical interest attaches to this old tavern, much of which although extremely interesting does not come within the limits of this note.

When I first knew the venerable old inn it was under the management

My father seemed pleased with the consideration which had been paid to him by this invitation, he then having just entered his majority, being twenty-three years of age, but was an active farmer of the town.

He gave me the following facts concerning Dr. Mitchill. He believed him to have been a great man, a native of Hempstead, and had worked himself up by self-education to a doctor and a lawyer, and had held many honorable positions, and that he had rendered great service to the farmers of Long Island. He had been dead about ten years.

No higher tribute could be paid to any man by my father than he paid to Dr. Mitchill. He was the greatest man he ever knew, and he had a great many sides.

He spoke of the address at the dinner as characterized by much serious thought, interspersed with great humor.

In looking over the above entry in our journal of 1843, in 1884, it occurred to us that history had not awarded the full measure of prominence to which he, Professor Mitchill, was justly entitled as a scientist, a scholar and a politician.

Samuel Latham Mitchill was born at Hempstead, August 20, 1764. He was the son of a Quaker farmer. He spent a life of great and varied intellectual activity, and died September 7, 1831, in the City of New York. After considerable preparation at home, of an elementary character, he completed his education at the University of Edinburgh and graduated an M. D. in 1786. He was the classmate of Sir James Macintosh and Thomas Addis Emmett. On his return to his native town he studied law in the office of Robert Yates and was appointed in 1788 a commissioner to treat with the Iroquois Indians, who were making much trouble with the English settlers on Long Island and elsewhere.

As professor of applied chemistry in Columbia College

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of Nehemiah Sammis, a grandson of the original Nehemiah. He was a typical English landlord as the old house was a typical English inn. It was a wonderfully preserved institution.

It was in the parlor of this old house that the greater portion of the names were attached to that celebrated petition—"To the Right Honorable Richard, Lord Viscount Howe, and to His Excellency the Honorable William Howe Esquire General of His Majesty's Colonies in America."

"The humble Representatives and Petition of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of Queens County on the Island of Nassau in the Province of New York." Here followed the petition dated Queens County, October 21, 1776, and signed by twelve hundred and eighty (1280) citizens of Queens County.



he first introduced into America the new nomenclature of Lavoisier. His ingenious theory septon and septic acid, says Dr. Frances, gave great impetus to the chemical researches of Sir Humphry Davy. Geology and zoology, however, were his favorite studies. He was a correspondent of Cuvier. "Show me a scale," said he, "and I will give you the portrait of a fish."

In 1790, and again in 1797, he was elected to the New York Legislature. In 1796, he explored the valley of the Hudson and the Mohawk and made some careful scientific investigations in the valley of the Mississippi. He was elected to Congress in 1801 and served until 1804. He accompanied Fulton on his first trip of the "Clermont" up the Hudson in 1807. Was appointed United States Senator and served until 1809, and with Thomas Jefferson examined the bones of the mammoth (mastodon) brought from Bone Lick, the great mausoleum of extinct monsters. He was professor of natural history, chemistry and agriculture in Columbia College from 1792 to 1802. In 1803 he was associated with Chancellor Robert R. Livingston and Simeon DeWitt in the establishment of a society for the promotion of agriculture.

He was professor of natural history and botany from 1808 to 1820; professor of botany and materia medica from 1820 to 1826. John Randolph said of him that he was the "Congressional library of his day."

Cobbett, for seven years resident in the Ludlow mansion at Hyde Park, said of Dr. Mitchill that he was "a man more full of knowledge and less conscious of it than I ever knew."

He was vice-president of Rutgers Medical College, New York City, in 1826; president of the New York County Society in 1807; surgeon-general of the militia under Governor DeWitt Clinton; president of the Lyceum of Natural History, New York City, and physician to the New York Hospital from 1796 to 1817.

He was a serious student, and still was one of the most versatile of men. He delivered a lecture before the "Krout



Club" of New York at a dinner. This club was composed of descendants from the original settlers. In this address he dilated upon the great merits and nature of the cabbage, it being the emblem of the club, its value to agriculturalists, its succulent properties and its high significance as an emblem of this great Krout Club, and why not the cabbage—the rose—the lily—the thistle—the shamrock—the onion and the leek are all emblems of greatness.

He made an address before the Turtle Club of solid men at Hoboken.

His geologic insight in recognizing America as the older world and American races the probable ancestors of all other peoples was a mark of great originality of thought and great boldness to assert. He delivered the annual oration of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Union College in 1821. He delivered the address dedicating the iron fence around the City Hall Park on December 31, 1821.

On the completion of the Erie Canal it was Dr. Mitchill who delivered the address, November 4, 1825.

Dr. Mitchill was assigned the highest rank among the cultivators of natural science. He increased the knowledge of ichthyology of the State of New York by adding two hundred new species in 1814 and 1817. He was the friend and associate of Cuvier and Audubon.

He was a large contributor to the scientific literature of his day; many of his productions have fallen into unmerited oblivion. He was called the Nestor of American science.

Halleck immortalized him in the "Croaker."

This little tribute we offer to the memory of one of the greatest of American products.

*Tuesday, October 17, 1843.*

Accompanied my father yesterday to Hempstead to hear the address of Hon. Daniel S. Dickinson before the Agricultural Society of Queens County. A great crowd was present, as many probably out of curiosity to see the orator as to hear the oration. Dickinson was a

State Senator at thirty-five, and he is now Lieutenant-Governor of New York.

The address was delivered under a tent erected for that purpose.

Daniel S. Dickinson was a truly great man, as shown in after life. He sunk all party preferences during the Civil war and supported the government in its efforts to put down lawlessness. He was a Democrat of the "Old Hunken" brand. He represented New York State in the United States Senate from 1844 to 1851, voted with the Democrats in the Wilmot Proviso and all the slavery questions, became attorney-general in New York in 1861, acted with the Union Republican party during the Civil war, was made district attorney of the southern district of New York by President Lincoln in 1865, and died in 1866. He was born in Connecticut.

*Sunday, March 17, 1844.*

Resolved on spending the day, Sunday, at the old homestead.

The morning ushered in cold, drizzly and foggy. Nothing can be more uncomfortable without, or cheerless within. But the day is eminently suited to our purpose. We have prepared to make ourselves comfortable within, having secured a copy of the interdicted book anonymously published, entitled "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation," just published in December, 1843. This book has been proscribed in our schools as one unfit for students to read. Now, in order to learn just what class of book is unfit for students to read, we are going to read this book, and we may, or may not, commend the wisdom of the trustees in taking it out of our library; a rebuke as scathing as the keenness of the insult of the trustees may result.

*Saturday, July 27, 1844.*

After long and tedious delays and disappointments the Long Island Railroad was this day opened from South Ferry, Brooklyn, to Greenport, the east end of Long Island. It had heretofore been in operation to Hicksville only.

The Long Island Railroad was one of the earliest chartered railroads in the United States. The first charter, covering territory over which the road now holds jurisdiction, was in 1832, which was for a road extending from the South Ferry, City of Brooklyn, to Jamaica. All the rights and assets of this road merged into the Long Island Railroad Company, which was organized under a special act of the Legislature in 1834, ten years ago, and today formally declared opened from the East River at South Ferry, Brooklyn, to the Village of Greenport, Suffolk County.

During the years 1836 and subsequently up to 1844, the Long Island Railroad had been completed and was in operation as far as

Hicksville only. The great financial panic of 1837, which paralyzed business and brought ruin upon thousands of old substantial institutions and firms, did not spare the Long Island Railroad. Consequently, all improvement was stayed, and it just barely continued to exist and pull through the embarrassed state of the financial world, running with contemplated regularity upon the completed track to Hicksville from South Ferry. Its prospects, however, were such as to inspire no confidence in the future or present stability. It was operated with vaguely defined timetables and no well determined intermediate stations. It had three locomotives only, the Ariel, Plowboy and Hicksville. We remember them very well; they seemed marvelous structures to us.

My father's family during this period patronized this road. We took the train at a station called Obesville, Clowesville, about one mile west of Mineola, by driving over with our team. This station had been furnished with a waiting room for the shelter of passengers and a horse-shed, and it was an important station. All the travel of the Village of Hempstead and surrounding country north and south patronized the station until 1840, when the branch known as Hempstead Branch, now Mineola, was created to the Village of Hempstead.

Nothing can be said in commendation of the equipments of the road during this period. The earliest coaches were constructed after the pattern of the English road coach. One of these coaches is now in the company's shed at Hempstead. The conductor collected fares from the outside of the car. We have seen fifty passengers at a time strolling about the plains in the immediate neighborhood of the road, while their train was on a sidetrack waiting for an up-train.

An hour's detention in a case of this kind was not an uncommon thing.

Matters, however, have improved very rapidly on this road since the extension of the road to Greenport. The old English coaches have been superceded by a more commodious car constructed purely upon an American idea. Great improvements have also been made in the running time of the trains.

Notwithstanding the financial depression of the country and the crippled condition of the company, they did succeed in maintaining the road and making some improvements shortly after the above mentioned period in 1837-38. A collision took place between the engine Ariel and Plowboy, which resulted in putting the Plowboy out of commission. The company not feeling justified in procuring a new engine, the road was operated with the two remaining engines and the only alternate adopted of decreasing the number of trips per day or discontinue entirely.\*

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\* These were among the earliest locomotives built in this country, and the old Ariel or Hicksville, I am not certain which, is still or was recently (1888) doing menial and servile service in a kindling wood factory at Greenpoint, having been but slightly remodeled, the old vertical cylinder and walking beam still in operation.

In 1840, as the financial atmosphere cleared up, a new impetus moved the company and they borrowed \$100,000, built a branch road from Mineola, Hempstead Branch, to the Village of Hempstead, and completed the trunk line to Greenport. This began a new era in the history of the Long Island Railroad.

The branch road to Hempstead was a great financial success. It entered a territory covered by a large population and vastly increased the passenger traffic, besides being greatly important in the carriage of freight.

The tracks in the Village of Hempstead were originally laid through the center of Main Street and terminated at the store of S. C. & I. Snedeker on Front Street.

The departure of each train was announced by a man in the street with a hand bell, who walked up and down the street proclaiming that "This train will leave in ( ) minutes." This terminus has since been removed to the head of Main Street, on the west side, near the Sammis Hotel, and a commodious passenger and freight station constructed there. (Since then removed to Fulton Street, east from Main Street.)

New life seems to have burst from the old conservative managers of the road. Other branch roads have been constructed or contemplated, both north and south from the main trunk road.

Immediately on the completion of the road to Greenport a line of steamers was contracted to be put in service between Greenport and New London in the early part of 1845, thus at once constituting a continuous line for mail and passenger service from New York to Boston. This promises to be a very popular and successful enterprise, and the Long Island Railroad an institution which all Long Island may regard with pride. But the road has only just entered upon its career of usefulness and profit. The conveniences offered to prospective settlers seeking country homes along the line of the road were very great, and already new settlements were springing into being and old ones being augmented by the great increase of population. All this will militate greatly to the advantage of the railroad and increase the value of real estate everywhere along the line of the road.

If the company now becomes thoroughly alive to its opportunities and acts generously with its patrons, the time is



not distant when instead of four trains of small capacity daily, it will require forty each of four times the capacity to accommodate its patrons.

*Tuesday, August 1, 1844.*

Our annual family picnic to Long Beach took place yesterday and met with the usual success and satisfaction to all concerned. An interesting feature of yesterday's picnic was that we were accompanied by some of our relatives from the West, now on a visit here, who had never before seen the ocean. At the first sight of the ocean from the beach hills they stood spellbound and never grew weary in watching the waves rolling in and breaking upon the beach. It was to them the most delightful day of their lives.

These relatives are cousins, of the Barwise family, whose parents moved out West before they were born. This is their first visit. They had heard their parents speak of the beach and ocean, but they had formed no conception of its grandeur.

Altogether, the day was most charmingly passed. The sun shone with intense fierceness, which resulted in some blistered arms and necks of indiscreet persons.

*January to April, 1845.*

During the past winter the journal received but little attention. We were much interested in our school studies and the journal was neglected, except school matters which have no status in this relation.

There were, nevertheless, several commonplace entries of ordinary events, which may be summarized as follows:

There had been extremely cold weather, of which there were several entries, and frequent and heavy falls of snow. The snow fell in such quantities and became so much drifted on the main road between our house and Uncle John Tredwell's that travel was suspended and we were obliged to take down our fences and permit the public to go through the lot in front of our house. Teams and loaded sleighs made a highway over the mill pond on the ice, on which they continued to travel for a period of five consecutive weeks, the ice being two feet thick, and teams travelled on the ice of the South Bay from the mainland to the beach, and yet people say: "We don't have any of the old-fashioned winters of former times." We know there are accounts from the old colonial days of great hardship endured by the early settlers in consequence of the severity of the winters, and from all accounts it does appear that as the land was opened up to cultivation and the forests cleared away the climate moderated, for if experience, aided by memory, can be depended upon, the winters do seem to have modified since the days of our grandfathers.

There were also random comments in the journal during

the winter upon the reprehensible conduct of certain shadowy beings who, it was said, held receptions at indefinite intervals in the midst of the tombstones of the private family burying ground on the farm of George Smith on the north side of the Merrick road, just west of his residence and in an old untenanted house on the south side of the road.

This was not a new thing; the reputation of this neighborhood for being haunted was of years' standing.

The surroundings were not calculated to stimulate cheerful emotions at any time, and of a dark night it was extremely pokerish. We never passed through there after dark without a shudder and a feeling of relief as we left the old spook-ridden abode behind. It was an ideal camping ground for ghosts and other unclean things, and the gossip of the place was full of their pranks. The ground was low and swampy; a little stream ran through it near the old house. A graveyard on the north side of the road and the old house about two hundred feet off the road on the south side, in which, it is said, a woman had been murdered years ago. It was not an old house; it had been built about twenty years and was erected by a doctor who came from New York and who was said to have been very rich. He lived in it about three years, when he mysteriously disappeared, out of which grew strange rumors.

The house had been without doors or windows for many years. The winds, rains and snows of summer and winter invaded its interior, but it stood in defiance of the elements.

Both sides of the road at this point were densely overgrown with trees, oaks, sassafras, pepperidge, etc., and an impenetrable tangle of shrubbery, wild grape vines and cat-briers. Associate such a landscape if you can with one o'clock A. M., a pale moon, a moaning wind and a hooting owl, and you have all the physical accessories for the construction of an ideal ghost colony, with a frisky celebrity for novelties in that line of goods.

The testimony of Abby Raynor, a spinster of sixty, who

lived in sight of the haunted house, was that many times during the last and previous winters she had seen through the open windows light in the old house at night and persons passing and repassing from room to room and performing queer antics. They did not remain long. She had no doubt but that the figures she saw were ghosts or that the old house was haunted.

In the early part of December, 1844, a very respectable old man named Jacob Smith, a small farmer, living on the north side of the Merrick road in the immediate neighborhood of the old house, was annoyed by frequently having his grain stacks torn down and the sheaves scattered about the yard during nights. Many people of the place said it was the work of the ghosts or spirits who frequented the old house, and that the annoyance to Mr. Smith was an act of revenge for the offensive and scandalous language he had used concerning them. But the old man Smith knew otherwise. He never bore testimony of ghosts, and any reference to them threw him into a furious passion. And he resolved to solve the problem himself, so he loaded his old flintlock fowling piece and watched several nights. Finally, about ten o'clock one night he saw a person come stealthily out of the woods and enter the yard and go directly to the grain stacks and commence taking the sheaves off and scatter them about the yard, and finally taking three sheaves under each arm, was going off with them. Mr. Smith called to him to lay down the oats. He said nothing, but kept on. Mr. Smith told him to lay down the oats or he would shoot. "Shoot and be d—d," said the ghost, at the same time making an effort to hold the sheaf of oats to protect his head. Mr. Smith did shoot, with the result that a neighbor by the name of E—H was confined to his house with a sickness never reported to the health board.

The grain stacks were never molested after that. And yet there were people in the community who preferred the mysterious, and who did not believe the old man's story. The

evidence of the truth of which, however, was a scar diagonally across E—H's left cheek inflicted by a number two buck shot. This scar he carried to his grave as a souvenir and damning proof that he was a thief and no ghost.

Now while there has been a great decline in ghostology, still there is a survival of the faith from past ages smouldering among all people of Puritan origin.

To those trained in infancy by their nurses in an atmosphere of nursery tales of spooks and hobgoblins, assimilate notions which no amount of after culture or training will entirely eliminate. The dread of dark and dismal places as the above described is plainly the ill effects of early inoculations.

We remember when a child and sometimes disobedient, being threatened that "Old Black Steve" would carry us off if we were naughty. Now, Old Black Steve was a manumitted slave, an encumbrance on the neighboring estate of Tredwell Seaman. He frequently passed our house, always drunk, sometimes singing Methodist hymns, sometimes praying. People used to say that it was a great sin to sell rum to old Steve—but why? His skin was black; he was ill looking; his name was a terror to children; everybody tried to make him odious, and rum was the only comfort he had. We became dreadfully afraid of him; he was our spook and our ghost.

But Old Steve lived long enough and we became discriminating enough before he died to enshrine him in our memory as one of the gentlest and most harmless men on earth. Kindred to this is the stuff of which ghosts are created.

In tracing along the history of delusions in search for origins or beginnings, we find them wonderfully prevalent in the Greek and Roman periods. Plato, Diodorus, Sicylus, Empedocles and Plutarch, and they charge the Egyptians with being their informants, and Egypt turns it over to India. The Adittyas of the Hindoos were the children of night and were modified in more recent times of Grecian and Roman



mythology into demons, beneficent beings, spirits, ghosts, messengers of the gods, etc.

That the ghosts of the dead should minister to the benefit of the living was a noble and beautiful idea, but these beneficent beings in after ages became to have an evil signification. All ghosts within the historic period have been harbingers of evil.

These ancient Greek and Roman philosophers exercised great influence over the popular human mind contemporaneous with them and a greater influence subsequently over the intelligent mind. We cannot entirely eliminate the early respect we entertained for those superstitions, fictions and myths breathed into our best life with our classical training.

There is nothing so remarkable or noteworthy about these stories of Raynortown ghosts as to distinguish them from any other ghost story in any part of the world, or of any age. They are the same stock in trade of the vendor of ghost literature from the remotest time. The spectres, the subjects of the present writing, sometimes appeared in the graveyard, but more frequently in the old house, where their evolutions were more in evidence through the open windows and doors, sometimes on the roof of the old house, than in the graveyard. They were always clad decently in vapory white. Sometimes they performed in the old house with a fire on the hearth. This made a very weird scene to the spectator. They made a great noise, sometimes accompanied with the fife and drum, and other times the clanking of chains.

None of their sessions were of more than fifteen minutes' duration. These short sessions gave but little opportunity to have their movements studied by experts, and there was no time to summon detectives or officers for their capture; few people even among those who knew they were frauds cared to attack them single handed, or to provoke any closer acquaintance. They were seldom seen by any person who could, or did, give an intelligent account of what they saw. Eye-witnesses seem to have become so paralyzed by fear as to loose

the capacity of reason or discernment, and their statements were as unsatisfactory and shadowy as the ghosts themselves.

These gruesome seances were generally in silence; sometimes, however, they were guilty of rollicking, uncourtly and vulgar behavior. Visitations were not frequent enough to cause alarm. They came, however, when least expected.

Intelligent citizens paid little or no regard to the ridiculous stories. But to a certain portion of the community these frightful phantoms were certainly demoralizing, as premonitions of sickness and death.

All these stories were, of course, hearsay. Not one in fifty of the mediums of their propagation had ever seen anything themselves. It was they principally who invented, multiplied and gave importance to these stories and pretended with an air of mystery that they were portentous of evil to someone. This caused the mischief.

There were in the pre-Columbian times many legends of evil spirits, or ghosts, among the Algonkins of this section of Long Island, one of which has survived to modern times. It was as follows. It was called the Winged Head:

This legend relates that one night a widow sat alone in her cabin and in a little fire near the door she was roasting acorns and taking them from the burning embers and eating them for her evening meal. She did not see the ghost, Winged Head, who stood in the doorway grinning at her. Finally, the ghost stealthily reached forth one of his long claws and snatched some of the coals of fire and thrust them into its mouth, thinking these were what the widow was eating.

With a howl and in great pain, it rushed out of the hut and disappeared, since which time no ghosts have appeared to the red man on Long Island.

More than four-fifths of the current ghost gossip of Raynortown was the invention of mischievous persons who gave it out with a grave and mysterious air regardless of truth. The other fifth was an exaggerated account of a real performance of some mooncalf personating ghosts. And it never

failed when interest lagged and ghost stock declined that a new incarnation did not follow. Thus, the ghost literature managed to survive.

The good people of the neighborhood who gave no heed to these manifestations except to ridicule and denounce them had nevertheless been more than usually annoyed and scandalized for the last six months about appearances in the old house, and had resolved that an end must be put to it, but were restrained from using stringent measures, as firearms, for fear of injuring some fool of the neighborhood, which might lead to serious regrets. Bullets, they say, will have no effect on real ghosts.

*April 10, 1845.*

The past has been an active winter in ghost demonstrations, not of the blood-curdling, but of the spooney-brained brood; none of the horrors of Grimm, where Hans plays at ten pins with a ghost using thigh bones for pins and skulls for balls, nor of the Weir Wolf kind, but mostly quiet, peaceable pantomime, old-fashioned spooks who were satisfied with being on exhibition and the subjects of conversation and the terror of the old women and children of the neighborhood.

They sang plaintive songs, imitated owls, cats and other animals.

These entertainments, which at intervals had lasted all winter, did not occupy more than fifteen minutes at any one seance, and the ghosts were off.

But finally these visitations became so frequent and flagrant that Jim Raynor and Tom Southard, two plucky yeomen of Raynortown, who feared not the devil, and ghosts less, had planned to entrap these ghosts, or pigwidgeons, and after laying in unsuccessful ambush several times during the spring, concluded that their movements were communicated to the would-be phantoms, for whenever they were out spook hunting no spooks appeared. They changed their tactics, and on April 10th they entrapped the Mephistotelian shadows.

The capture was accomplished by stretching a rope across the only exit from the premises (the old house) while the ghosts were within, then giving an alarm. The ghosts in their haste to escape to the swamp tripped over the rope and over each other and their captors fell upon them. One, however, escaped; the other was captured and when brought to the light materialized into a simple fellow well known in the neighborhood, whose inordinate love for sensation had impelled to this act of assuming the role of ghost, which he had been acting for a long time without any unpleasant complications to the present, but who had on the present occasion evidently struck a storm centre, for it

is said he was pretty roughly handled by his captors. He was put on exhibition with his ghost toggery on at the store of Riley Raynor at Raynortown, on the second floor of which Squire Smith held his court. The Justice was sent for, before whom a charge was made of disturbing the public peace. After a hearing he was set at liberty on his own recognizance and a promise to transgress no more. Raynor and Southard were complimented by the Court.

But the capture and exposure did in no degree lessen the number of believers in ghosts and the supernatural; the faith continued. Exhibitions, however, ceased.

The only apology we have to make for taking the reader's time with these ridiculous ghost stories and comments is the entry in the diary, and nothing less could have been said about them, if said at all; and, secondly, that by calling attention, some interested student in folk lore, or local tradition, might be stimulated to an interest in the subject and collect in aid to science this literature, of which the country is full, but which must soon become extinct.

In all communities of New England paternity—a people so noted for rugged common sense and personal grit—both solubles of ghost stories, there still remains a lingering belief among the lowly in these fallacious tales of ghosts and witches, in lucky and unlucky days and lucky numbers and many other ridiculous beliefs. We are astounded at the number of people we meet who will begin no enterprise on Friday.

To an extent by no means creditable to the former dwellers on the territory covered by these reminiscences, particularly the necks, haunted localities and ghost stories prevailed; every old, deserted structure and untenanted building was the subject of some strange spook story or supernatural legend purely of the imagination.

Nor were these utopian conceptions confined to the lower orders in past times, for there were ghosts of quality of the higher orders, as Cæsar's ghost, Banquo's ghost, ghost of Hamlet's father, the pumpkin-headed spectre of Sleepy Hollow, Skeleton in Armor, the Flying Dutchman, Headless Horseman, Boucicault's Vampire, the Mysteries of Udolpho.



These were dignified spectres who had modes of behavior of their own and were not a loquacious set—for

No ghost of common sense  
Maintains a conversation.

—*Carroll's Phantom.*

According to Olaus Magnus, the northern nations regarded ghosts as gnomes, or departed spirits, who for the commission of some crime were doomed to wander up and down the earth for a certain period.

All the great historical ghost scenes are laid in the regions of ice and snow; high latitudes are the productive hives of legend, myth, dream, visions, fairy and saga tales. No country is more productive than Iceland in fairy lore. The Finns were a very superstitious people.

*Thursday, March 6, 1845.*

On the third of the present March an act was passed by Congress reducing the rates of postage on letters to five cents for all distances under three hundred miles, and all over that distance ten cents. This will be a great boon to the poor man. It is he that is specially benefitted by it. The rich man don't care. And yet this measure of cheap postage has been for years persistently opposed by the leaders of the Democratic party, the avowed friends of the poor man.

The southern states have taken the lead in resisting cheap postage, notwithstanding not a state in the south ever paid its own postage, their deficiencies being paid by the North. Edward Everitt began the agitation for the reduction of postage in 1836. Virginia opposed it; the surplus of Massachusetts was just equal to Virginia's shortage. Virginia believed that under a reduced rate the shortage would be greater. Edward Everitt believed it would be enough greater in Massachusetts to pay it.

It is well for people to know to whom they are indebted for blessings; to what party they are indebted for the foresight and statesmanship to accomplish great reforms. Low postage is a Whig measure and we shall see how it works.

As to our case individually (our family), we have been sending and receiving letters from our relatives in the West at a cost of twenty-five, sometimes thirty, cents per letter. The new law reduces such letters to ten cents, some to five, an average reduction of over two-thirds. Where a large correspondence was kept up, as in our case, this is a measure to be truly thankful for.













